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Vol. 1.

JIM BLUDSOE, Jr., the Boy Phenix; Or, THROUGH TO DEATH

BY EDWARD L. WHEELER.

AUTHOR OF "DEADWOOD DICK DOUBLE DAGGERS. CLOVEN HOOF," ETC., ETC.



"JIM BLUDSOE, JR., AT YOUR SERVICE!" HE REPLIED, COOLLY.

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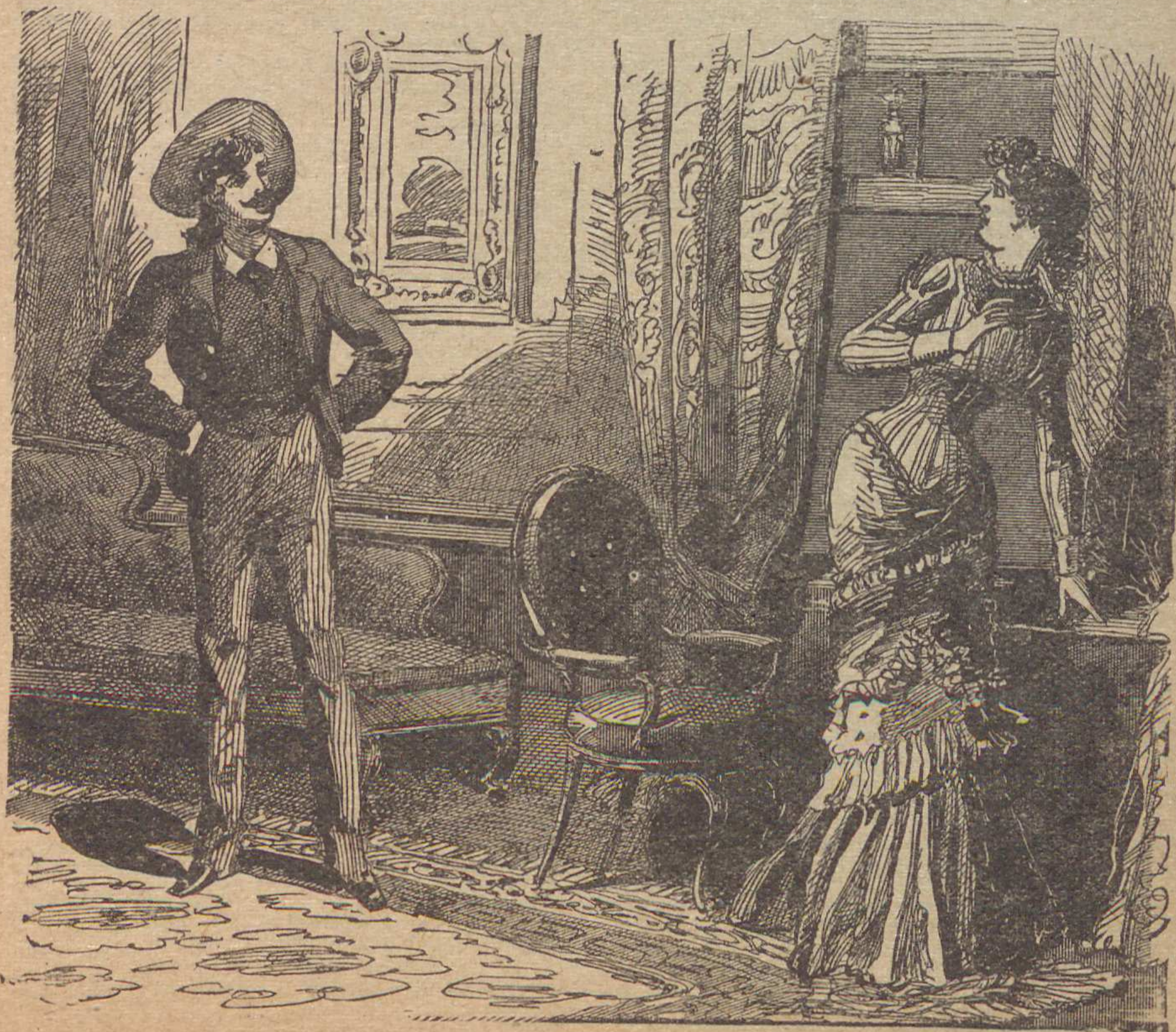
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Vol. I.

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A Story of City and Far Western Life.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MORGAN INHERITANCE—BOY AND MAN—"BETTER ENEMIES THAN FRIENDS."

THE opening scene in this eventful drama in real life, occurs in the dingy room of one of the foremost characters—a dark, cheerless apartment on the third floor of a low tenement-house on Alaska street in the Centennial City of Philadelphia. Alaska street you must know is one of the two worst streets in the Keystone State metropolis, and is populated literally with the 'scum of creation'; for here is the undisputable home of thieves, cracksmen and even murderers—a sort of head-quarters of crime and vice.

Every well or ill-regulated city has its quarters of this kind, an eye-sore to the respectable and good-doing citizens.

In the room on the third floor of Mother Maginn's tenement, as the rickety old building was called, there was little that was attractive; poverty and careless neglect were so evident as to inspire the belief that it was the abode of some beggarly tramp, or bum.

There was a dim light struggling into the room on this drizzling May day, that had hard work to find entrance through the single dirty window.

The floor was bare; the furniture comprised a couple of chairs, a table, stove, cot-bed, and desk; the poorly papered wall was covered with frameless cheap lithographs of noted actresses, such as Lotta, Davenport, Siddons, Clara Morris, etc.

And yet the occupant of this domicile was neither a beggar nor a bum—a youth, instead, whose age was probably seventeen, although the maturity of face and form would have pronounced him older by three or four years. In form he was muscular, symmetrical and graceful, and of about the medium height of men, his bodily development betraying that he was no stranger to healthy exercise. His compact, wiry form was clad in a threadbare suit of gray, with patches at the knees and elbows of contrasting colors, which the generosity of old Mother Maginn had kindly provided. The shoes upon his feet and hat upon his head, were full of air-holes! Yet this youth seemed full as happy, as though his costume had lately come from the most fashionable furnishing store in town.

The face of the boy was one to study—a face that we do not often encounter, with shrewdness, cool courage, wit, strong passions under excellent control, all expressed in it—a face with a fresh, healthy tint, and still a face that when drawn to sternness, produced a feeling of awe. There are handsome faces, as the word goes, to be seen almost every block, in a large city like Philadelphia. If that of this youth was not what an artist would pronounce "handsome," it was "striking," with a pair of black eyes, whose evident power and keenness were something wonderful. The hair that clustered about his temples in little curls, and ran in waves down the back of a well-shaped head was brownish in color. The first struggling approaches of a mustache graced his lip; otherwise his face was beardless.

And such was Sam Morgan, Bohemian, odd-jobber and youth of leisure, whom we propose to make the "hero" of this little romance.

Sam was perched upon the edge of the bed, as we have described him, picking the strings of an old banjo, and occasionally breaking out with a snatch of some popular song. He fingered the instrument with skill, calling forth melody not often produced in these rude instruments; and, too, his voice was of admirable tone, although there was a single perceptible fault with it—a quick, jerky manner of delivery, peculiar to hear.

One verse in particular, seemed to impress a sinister-faced man, who stood an unobserved spectator and listener, in the open doorway, and a frown furrowed his forehead, as he heard the words—

"Don't crowd on your neighbor, I'd advise you,
With the thought that you'll triumph and win.
For friends will all criticise you
When I flap up the trump card, ag'in."

The words would seem to have "struck home" to this listener, for his eyes gleamed evilly as he stepped across the threshold into the room, with heavy tread.

"Well done, boy!" he said, patronizingly. "Your voice should procure you a place on the stage."

Sam looked up from his banjo, a change of expression coming over his features as he beheld the intruder—a thick-set, richly dressed individual of some three and thirty years, with a well-fattened face; almost brigandish it looked with the dark, gray-threaded hair, and heavy black mustache.

Dissipation had left deep marks upon his countenance, whose darkened hue was but a reflection from his nature.

"Arnold Chelton, you here?" the young tenant of the garret demanded. "I should have as soon expected a visit from Old Nick, himself. To what do I owe this honor?"

"To what? Why to my desire to see to the welfare of my relatives and acquaintances, and you being a cousin, I could not pass you by without looking in upon you. How do you get along, boy?"

"How? Well, sometimes this way and sometimes that. I am at present Bohemianizing it—with as little nourishment as Mother Maginn can spare, after feeding sixteen little Maginns. Haven't got down to bell-pulling after cold victuals, yet, however, as you, no doubt, supposed."

"I confess I am surprised that you still hold your head above water," Chelton said, accepting a seat, uninvited, and crossing his legs, while he blew a cloud of smoke toward a ceiling whose ebony hue suggested a needed application of the white-wash brush. "I failed to see how you could exist, after getting suspended from employment at Wanamaker's—"

"Through your instrumentality, my liege lord!" Morgan replied, with biting sarcasm. "But, it is a saying that 'a toad is not always killed when stepped on'—which applies to my case."

The other smothered an imprecation.

"I had nothing to do with your discharge!" he growled, twisting the ends of his mustache. "You stole money, and it was only through Wanamaker's leniency that you escaped a term in Moyamensing prison, which you deserved."

"You're a liar!" Sam cried, coolly, although he was very much angered. "It was all a conspiracy on your part with one of the foremen, to have me ousted. But, never mind, Arnold Chelton; a day of reckoning is in store between you and me, yet. I am a boy in years, but as Nobles says in the *Phoenix*: 'I've an eye as keen and an arm as strong as the man I have to grapple with.' You'll find you have a *man* to fight, in me, even though it will take four years to bring me to twenty-one. Yesterday I was seventeen, and I celebrated the event by four hours' practice at the gymnasium, and lager beer at Tony's around the corner. A gay time we Bohemians have."

"And, now, Arnold Chelton, since you have honored me with a visit, let us come to a permanent understanding."

"Exactly!" the elder assented, extending a case of fragrant cigars. "Smoke?"

"No, thank you. I never smoke in the presence of greater villains than myself. It is contamination to the atmosphere. Besides, I only shortly ago finished a pipe over the knotty problem of how I was going to raise twenty-five cents to get a square dinner with."

"Let me loan you a dollar."

"Oh! no; guess I am not that hard up yet. I'd go without grub a month before I'd accept a penny of the money which you gamble for. *That's* worse than stealing, in my estimation. Now, to business. I understand that my uncle, and yours, is about to resign his claims upon this life, when one or the other of us must become the possessor of his wealth?"

"I believe that is the decision of the medical fraternity," Chelton acknowledged, graciously; "and so it again turns out that we are rivals—in fortune as in love."

"Correct! Rivals, and each has an equal show. I think my chance is about as good as yours—more so, if you do not instill poison into my uncle's mind, as you did into that of Louise Lester."

"Your opinion of me is not very exalted, it appears!" Chelton sneered, a flush of anger dyeing his dark features.

"No, not above par," Sam declared, with a cool laugh. "We villains are not given to compliments, you know, strange as it may seem."

"Humph! class yourself with villains," Chelton retorted. "I am a gentleman."

"Oh! you *are*? Since when, pray?"

"Always, boy. I dare you to say you ever knew the time when I was not a gentleman, sir!"

"Ha! ha!" and the young Bohemian laughed, tantalizingly. "Arnold Chelton, gentleman—and gambler! That sounds well enough among such as you associate with, but not down here in Alaska street. Don't dare me to do anything, beloved cousin. It's dangerous! Any one from the Delaware to Mantua will tell you who Sam Morgan is."

"I don't need to inquire; nor did I come here to compromise. I came to *make* you promise not to interfere in this inheritance business, until after Jacob Morgan has shuffled off this mortal coil."

Sam Morgan stared straight at the man to whom he was unhappily related, thrumming on the old banjo in the mean time.

"You came to *make* me?" he repeated reflectively.

"I came to make you. See here," and the villain drew a paper from his pocket. "This is a warrant for your arrest for burglary. You were in Jacob Morgan's house, last evening, and were seen to leave, by way of a window, after failing to attain some unknown object. Three persons saw you, one of the three being your faithful, loving cousin—myself. I have but to place this document in the hands of the nearest police officer, to insure you a ride in the van to the Central, and then to Moyamensing!"

The Bohemian received the news with a smile, which Chelton could not understand. He grew uneasy.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, shifting in his seat.

"Go on and order my arrest. Send me to the county prison, if you like!" young Morgan said, coolly. "While there, I shall write a sensation book about the sudden death of Carrie Moore at the Sherman House!"

The effect of the words were electrical. Chelton leaped to his feet, and staggered back, aghast, every particle of color leaving his face. He trembled as in an ague spasm; his eyes glared like those of some infuriated wild beast.

"You—you—" he began.

"Know enough about the matter to hang you higher than Haman, if you are aware of the nature and altitude of Haman's predicament!" the youth finished, coolly. "Let me advise you not to crowd on your neighbors, Arnold Chelton, lest they crowd back."

"I'll kill you!" the gambler foamed.

"Haven't the least doubt but you will try to, but that isn't saying you'll accomplish your aim. Arnold Chelton, we two cousins are taking hands in two games of cards—one for hearts and one for diamonds; but understand that I will match queens against your knaves. I am a boy, and you are a man. I am a Bohemian—you are a gambler. I am a loafer—you are a rascal. Both are to contend for the Morgan inheritance; you will combine force with villainy; I will match cunning against villainy; and we will see who will come out the best."

"Thank you," Chelton sneered, taking off his silk hat, and glossing it with the sleeve of his coat; "I see you are disposed to play this hand against me. I am one not to back out; still I have a proposal to make you."

"As I understand it, our uncle's property, real estate, bonds and ready cash, amounts to something like half a million. I'll give you fifty thousand if you will clear for Europe, and never come back."

"Which I decline!"

"Then we are to be enemies?"

"Enemies to the last!"

"Be it so then. Look out for me."

"You will do well to look out for yourself. Remember that Sam Morgan the young vagabond and Bohemian is not the dog to lay down and die, when there is anything to live for. Though a boy in years, he has the heart and brain of a man—

"With teeth as sharp
And muscles strong
And scent as keen
And claws as long
As a wildcat in its lair!"

"As you like. I am your enemy, then, henceforth. It is war declared between us?"

"It is war declared between us. Cunning against scoundrelism—ingenuity against villainy, wit against brute force!"

Chelton bowed, and left the young Bohemian's home.

CHAPTER II.

THE RIVAL'S WOUND.

ARNOLD CHELTON left the old tenement in Alaska street, walked to Eleventh street, where he had some business to transact; then jumped aboard the north-going cars, and rode until he was several squares north of Girard avenue, when he disembarked and rung the bell of a large, respectable-looking house, standing out to the pavement, with a row of others.

He glanced himself over to see that his dress was faultless in every particular; then looked up with a pleasant smile illuminating his dark countenance, as a mulatto girl opened the door.

"Good-morning, Lydia," the gambler said, with a gracious bow. "Is your young mistress in?"

And he extended a perfumed card, which the girl received, and hurried away with, instead of inviting him into the parlor.

She presently returned however, and ushered him into a handsomely-furnished reception-room, where everything was quiet elegance; and the matchless taste displayed in the arrangements betrayed a woman's supervision.

Chelton, surrendering his hat and gloves to Lydia, sunk into a seat, and at the sound of light footsteps upon the carpet, put on a smile of welcome for the vision of brightness, that came like a ray of spring sunshine into his presence.

"My dear Miss Lester!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet, and grasping her shyly-extended hand, with warm pressure. "How delighted I am to see

you once more! You are looking sweetly fresh and winning this morning, and if I were a cannibal, I—"

"You would eat me, no doubt," the girl replied, with a merry little laugh.

And, indeed, she was lovely, in her airy wrapper, with a bunch of hot-house roses at her throat, and another bunch in her soft, chestnut hair.

She was a beautiful creature, in the fullest sense of the word, with a form of symmetrical mold, and a sweet face, of regular feature and creamy complexion; eyes brightly blue and sparkling, and a mouth of tempting sweetness. Her manner was free and unconventional; too much so, perhaps, but then she was a young thing yet, just verging on seventeen, an orphan heiress, and no one to obey but herself.

Old Gerald Lester, on his death-bed, had requested that no guardian should be appointed over his child, but that she should be left free to do as it pleased her to do, he having entire and proud confidence in her discretion and judgment.

"You must excuse me, dear Miss Louie!" Chelton said, drawing her to a seat upon a luxurious sofa, near the window, "for calling upon you so soon, morning being a poor time for calls. But I am going to New York at twelve, and wanted to bid you good-by."

"Indeed? I am glad you called. Do you intend to stay in New York?"

"I hardly know. Perhaps I shall, as there is nothing to keep me here, that I know of, unless it would be one thing. I have a few friends, but it is an old established fact that the best of friends must part."

"Of course. But, no doubt, your friends would miss you, Mr. Chelton, I among the rest, as you have been a frequent visitor here since papa died."

"And a very interested visitor, too, dear friend. I am a man who has seen my share of the bright and dark sides of life; I have moved in the best social circles, and have seen many ladies noted for their wealth, beauty and personal worth. But, believe me, I have never found the idol of my heart, until—"

"Be careful, Mr. Chelton. Such words as are on your tongue should not be spoken in haste," the girl said, gravely. "They are words you may be sorry for in the future."

"Oh! no, Louie, dear; I shall never regret them. Let me out with it—let me tell you that I dearly love you, above all women on the face of this fair earth—that I worship you, blindly, passionately, as man can love but once in a lifetime; as man never loved before."

And he went on pouring forth the old, old tale of love, which never grows stale to young hearts; told her of his mad infatuation for her; how he would spend his whole life and labor to make hers the happiest lot that ever befell woman.

He appeared deeply sincere, and it seemed as if the man's whole ardent soul found expression from his lips.

Louie Lester listened, with a grave, troubled look upon her face; listened with the knowledge that his words caused a strange ecstatic sensation in her young heart. No one had ever spoken of love to her before, although she had thought she had a faint idea of the meaning of the word; it charmed her now; it was soothing to her heart which had been attacked with a longing for some one to love, since the death of her last parent, a year before.

She listened, and gazed straight into his eyes, with a look that made him quail.

"Mr. Chelton, I have heard you through, and am flattered by your kind offer, but I am not at liberty to give you an answer yet," she said, in her sweet, grave way. "You probably know that you have a rival, who, though he has never told me he loved me, I have every reason to believe does. And I think a great deal of him. Mr. Chelton, does not the vision of Carrie Moore sometimes haunt your dreams?"

The man leaped to his feet as though he had been bitten by an adder. His face was deathly white, and a tigerish gleam in his midnight orbs betrayed the fact that he was deeply enraged.

"He told you to say that, did he?" was his hoarse demand.

"He did, Mr. Chelton, and it appears that you have a skeleton in the closet!"

"Yes! yes!" he murmured, as though to himself, "so I have, but I'll burden my soul no longer. He swore he'd steal you away from me, but he shall not triumph. Louie, dear, I will tell you all, and I know you will not reproach me. I have been a man over whose life for the past two years a blight has hung. I have been fighting against remorse, my enemies, and the devil."

"Two years ago, I shot and killed this Carrie Moore by mistake. I was stopping at the Sherman House, in this city, and she was stopping at the same place. I paid her a few proper attentions, and she became infatuated. I then was forced to dismiss her, but that only made matters worse. One night, she procured entrance into my sleeping-apartment, with some unknown intention, and waking from a sound sleep and mistaking her for a burglar, I shot her through the heart! Oh! Louise, how bitterly I have repented that act; how I have prayed that it might all turn out to be a dream. But, such is fated not to be the case. The dead cannot be recalled to life!"

The man here broke down, and burying his face in his hands, he wept, his whole frame convulsed with his emotion. In all probability his repentance was sincere. And his display of emotion affected Louie more than words could have done. She was gradually awakening to a feeling of deep sympathy for this Arnold Chelton, who had ever thus far proven himself a friend and a gentleman; and sympathy is akin to love!

"Do not grieve; I believe you," she said. "You were not to blame. I like you all the better, then, for telling me."

"And you *do* like me—can you *love* me?" he questioned, brightening up, with an intense eagerness in his tone. "Oh, darling! only say that you do love me, and I shall be the happiest man in the city—the very happiest!"

And using all the arts of one skilled in dissembling—treating her with exquisite gentleness, and adoration expressed in word and look—what wonder the artless, inexperienced girl was lured to forgetfulness of her love for another, and drifted almost unconsciously into the snare he had so cunningly laid to entrap her into a tacit engagement?

Two hours the gambler spent with his innocent prize, picturing the happy life in store for them; then he left, with an early wedding-day promised, perhaps happy as he had ever been in his life.

It was more happiness to him that he had won an heiress, and a triumph over an enemy such as was Sam Morgan, the young Bohemian. It was a pleasure to know that the youth had lost where, successful rogue that he was, he had won.

After his departure, Louie Lester sat for a long while in the reception room, her face buried in her white, jeweled hands, and her mind busied with thoughts of what had just passed.

"What have I done?" she asked of herself, over and over again. "Engaged myself to marry this man, who has fascinated me almost against my will? Ah! *do* I love him? Can I be contented and happy, when—when Sam Morgan—Sam Morgan! What a name! Yet what a noble heart he has! Oh! I hope I shall not see him again—never, for it will make me regret the past. Ah! can it be that I regret my decision already?"

She arose and went to the piano that stood open at the further side of the room. Seating herself, she ran her fingers lightly over the keys; then struck into a lively gallop, producing strains delightful to the ear.

Suddenly she turned from the piano, with a faint exclamation of surprise, as the odor of cigar-smoke reached her sensitive nostrils.

"Sam Morgan!" she exclaimed, as her eyes rested upon that very individual, who, ensconced upon the sofa, with a cigar between his pearly teeth, and his feet hoisted on top of a chair-back, was evidently hugely enjoying the surroundings and the music.

"Present!" the young Bohemian assented, with imperturbable coolness. "Generally am round about grub-time, you know. Been studyin' two hours to find out how I could by a square meal with half a dime, which I picked up on Chestnut street, but got stuck; so I concluded I'd meander around here for a round o' rations."

"Sam, you are awful!" Miss Lester exclaimed. "Don't you know that is a ridiculous position to occupy? and, then, gentlemen never smoke in the presence of ladies."

"Oh! they don't, oh?" Sam queried, laying the cigar upon the center-table. "Didn't know that before. The women an' gals don't take a back-seat when you 'set 'em up,' down in Alaska street."

"Ugh! what a horrible set of people they must be! Are you hungry, Sam?"

"What if I am?" the youth demanded, quickly.

"Because I will get you a lunch."

"Oh! no you won't! Sam Morgan don't accept charity, if you please. I was just funning with you about the grub. I come here on different business."

"What business, Sam?"

"Well, that's rather a ticklish way to put it to a feller. You might 'a' sed, 'I'm all attention,' which would have been just as well."

"Well, 'I'm all attention,' then, if that is any better, Sam."

"That's more business-like. S'posin' you come and sit here on the sofa, Miss Louie; mebbe I could not say my say so scientific, with you setting off there."

"I'd rather not, Mr. Morgan."

"But I'd rather you would."

He arose, in his rather unpresentable garb, and went over and seized her by the wrist—gently but firmly.

"Come, Louie, you shall not trifle with me," he said; and, seeing that he was resolved, she followed him, and seated herself beside him on the sofa. But she trembled in every limb, for [she could but guess what was coming.

"Louie!" the young Bohemian said, in a low tone, "I have come here to tell you that I love you, and ask you to take the name of Morgan in exchange for that of Lester. I am not going to give vent to whole yards of nectar-impregnated effusions, like my cousin, a short time ago, nor am I going to get down on my knees before you. I offer you the love of a Bohemian—a rough, honest, but untiring affection, that will stand the test of flood or fire. Perhaps, as I am only seventeen, you think me incapable of loving as strongly as a man of thirty-five, but you are mistaken in that respect. I offer myself, and you can accept or decline, at your own option. I am poor—have just five cents on which to commence house-keeping; not a very entertaining prospect, I'm aware, but many a gal's begun on worse. To-morrow, Sam Morgan's going to launch forth into the world in a new strike, at which he can attain a reputation, ef he don't make a cent—and a young married couple ought to be able to exist on reputation and love, pretty well."

All this was said with that cool composure which was a marked characteristic of the youth.

Yet tears sprung into Louie's eyes, and she wept with her head bowed upon his shoulder; wept, from the very utmost depths of her young heart.

"You love me and will be mine?" the youth demanded, a tenderness in his voice that betrayed his deep emotion. "Oh! darling, say yes, and that you will break the engagement with Arnold Chelton!"

"No! no! I cannot!" she replied, hastily. "I

shall marry him, Mr. Morgan, for I promised him in good faith. You should not have come."

"Maybe not!" he replied, "but I was in the hall, and overheard most of my cousin's wooing. I wish you the best of luck and a happy life with that man, Louie. He and I are enemies—bitter foes, with a fortune standing between us. I shall fight him till the game is dead. Again and again he may kill me, but, like the Phenix, I shall each time rise from my ashes to continue the battle. Greek shall meet Greek. Farewell, Louise; may your happiness be supreme; may my love never haunt you, like a reproachful phantom!"

This much; then the young Bohemian had gone!

CHAPTER III.

PLOTTING AGAINST TWO—AN UNSUSPECTED TRAP.

ARNOLD CHELTON, after leaving the home of Louie Lester, his affianced wife, walked over to Tenth street and took the southward cars as far as Chestnut street, where he got off and walked through Philadelphia's Broadway of business and bustle. The side-paves were crowded with aristocratic and fashionably-dressed people—with boot-blacks and news-boys, common folk, pickpockets and blackguards.

Chelton, however, took no notice of what was going on around him, but pushed rapidly through to Sixth street, into which he turned and walked south to Walnut.

Ascending a pair of stairs leading to the third floor of a prominent brick row, he knocked at the door of a side room, and was hailed to come in, by some one from within, which he accordingly did.

Inside, the room was fitted up as an office, with leathern-bound furniture, desks, tables, and book-cases.

An air of comfort, and cigar-smoke pervaded the apartment, and a young man who had been poring over a volume of Blackstone, sprung to his feet and grasped Chelton's hand cordially.

"Glad to see you, pard," he said, with a laugh.

"How's faro, since I saw you last?"

"Deucedly poor luck, Charley. Lost heavily, last night—"

"And come to borrow a new supply to recommence operations with, eh?" the young student queried, as he motioned his guest to a seat. "Well, I am sorry to say I just made a bank deposit of my last spare dollar."

"Hang it, what are you blowing at?" Chelton growled, with a frown. "I came to borrow none of your money. Have a couple of thousand left in the bank of my own, before I shall need to beg or borrow. I came to ask a favor of you, which you can afford to grant, Heston, for I've done you many a turn, you will remember."

"Yes, so you have, old fellow. What can I do for you in my line of business?"

"Well, you see, I have got myself promised to a little damsel around here on Eleventh street, and we propose to join our hearts and hands, sometime next week. But I do not care to be legally harnessed in with the second party of the transaction, for reasons best known to myself, you see; and I thought I might prevail upon you to fix yourself up as a clergyman, and come and tie a knot. As you have not yet been admitted to the bar, it would not be holding!"

"No, I suppose not," Heston said, drumming thoughtfully upon the table with his fingers. "Deuced mean drive to come over a respectable girl, though!"

"Bah! that's nothing. I've been in the harness twice before, in that shape. No harm at all. If the girl behaves herself properly, I shall never tell her the difference; but if she shows her teeth and becomes unruly, after the first year of honeymooning, I shall shove her off upon her own cheek."

"Humph! you are a worse villain than I took you to be, Chelton. Who is this victim?"

"Her name is Louise Lester."

"Louise Lester?"

"Yes; do you know her?"

"No; but she knows me, which would make it necessary for me to come in disguise."

"Immaterial to me about that. Come one week from to-night, at No. — North Eleventh street, at 7 o'clock."

"Very well. Best leave a V as guarantee of good faith," the student reminded, as Chelton arose.

"Oh! certainly," and the gambler counted out three tens from a roll of bills. "There's a good round fee, and you can afford to do a fair job."

"And I will do a *fair* job!" Heston exclaimed, after the scheming villain had departed.

From the lawyer's office Chelton went to St. Mary's, south of Walnut street, between Sixth and Seventh. This is the worst locality, without doubt, in the Centennial City. It is a narrow, filthy thoroughfare, bordered by old tumble-down tenements, filled with an indiscriminate mass of humanity; a neighborhood with which even Alaska street cannot vie in crime and debauchery; a nest-hide for criminals of every stamp, which even the well-regulated police hesitate to give an annual cleaning out. Such sights as a visit to the dens in this street reveals, can never become erased from the memory of one who has been through them. In company with a spy, the author has had the opportunity of exploring some of the dens of crime and iniquity, and therefore knows whereof he writes.

Chelton entered the street with some little hesitation, for it was none too safe to venture thus into a nest of thieves for a man of his stamp. Crimes were sometimes committed in broad daylight, and the city seemed pervaded with an atmosphere of horrors.

As he passed along the walk, reeking with filth, he could but notice a few of the more noticeable characteristics of the place.

In one house a pitched-battle was going on between a drunken husband and wife; a few steps further a young and really handsome female lay half-indoors and half-out, dead-drunk; still further on, sounds coming from within a saloon, announced that a drunken brawl was occurring. Here was a bloated, evil-faced rough lying in the gutter, with an ugly wound upon his forehead. Probably he was not dead, or he would have been hastily stored away by these denizens of St. Mary's street, who are leagued in a sort of colony, protective and secretive.

All of this Arnold Chelton noticed within half a square's distance, and he silently thanked God that, villain though he was, he had not got reduced to this disgusting level.

At last he found the number he was in search of, and gave a brisk rap upon the door. But no one appeared to answer the summons.

"Ha! ha!" he chuckled, "the old fox is still very shy, or else he is out. I will try the old rap."

He gave five light knocks upon the door, and one heavy thump; then, after a couple of minutes, a repetition. The result was soon proven by the cautious opening of the door.

The next moment Chelton was pulled inside the room and the door slammed shut and locked by a large muscular man, with a low-browed, sinister countenance, evil-gleaming black eyes, and long shaggy hair of the same hue. He was a repulsive-looking customer, whom beastly intoxication had made a human wolf—a man steeped in crime, and just such as met the present demand of Arnold Chelton. Coming from the wilds of the West, he was naturally possessed of a sort of brute courage and strength; and a few years spent in St. Mary's street had polished him off into a first-class combination of the villain and ruffian.

"Still wary as ever, I see, Gueleppo!" Chelton said, with a light laugh, as he seated himself at a table, whereon were a bottle and glasses. "Don't lose any of your caution."

"No!" the ruffian growled, sullenly. "The cursed blue-coats are keeping a stricter watch on the street

than usual, curse them; they're worse than ever since Stokely's mayor. Had things pretty soft in Fox's term."

"I presume so, though God forbid that the neighborhood was any worse then than now. What have you in this black bottle, old man—benzine?"

"Pure alcohol, you bet. Needn't imbibe, unless you're especially dry, for there ain't more'n three good hummers left."

"Don't fear that I shall trouble your hell-on-fire!" the gambler sneered, contemptuously. "I don't drink anything more poisoned than champagne."

"Course not! You're a high-toned rooster. Seen the time, when I war in the mines, that I could buy ye out a dozen times."

"Haven't a doubt of it. But those times are passed. You're glad to get murders to commit at five cents apiece, now!"

"Oh, no; you're mistaken!" Gueleppo replied, coolly. "Perhaps I do work off the surplus o' humanity, as you say, but I get *paid* for it."

"Do you want a case now?"

"Do I? Well, I ain't purticklar. Have a few dates open, which I might fill to advantage. What's the lay?"

"An easy one, I should say, if I were engaged in the wholesale slaughtering business; a boy, aged seventeen."

Gueleppo poured out a brimming glass of the alcohol and tossed it off with a gulp, smacking his lips as if it were good.

"A boy, eh? Seventeen years old. Just the toughest age of lads to handle. What name is it?"

"Sam Morgan."

"The deuce you say!"

"No; only an ace; Sam Morgan."

The "wholesale slaughterer" swore an Italian oath. Italian was mixed with Spanish in the blood that coursed through his veins.

"Sam Morgan is a cuss!" he declared, emphatically. "It will require a good deal of scheming to take him. He is secretly in favor with the detectives, I suspect. I must have your co-operation, if I undertake the case. How must he be disposed of—*S. D.?*"

"Of course—'sure death.' It must be sure, too. If it costs money, let it cost; I am willing to pay for his death!"

"Very well, I'll finish this alcohol over the matter. I may strike upon a good plan soon."

"The sooner the better."

"Of course. Hold yourself to go to work with me at an instant's notice. It must be done in a way that will forever throw suspicion off of our heads."

"Correct! You know my address?"

"I do, and will soon trouble you for a hundred dollars, no doubt."

"Which will be all right, if you only get rid of the boy," Chelton said, as he was shown out.

"Ha! ha!" he chuckled, as he made his way homeward; "this has been a day of days to me, and success stares me in the face, all around."

Sam Morgan left the Lester mansion in an unenviable frame of mind.

His rejection by the only girl he had ever cared for, in particular, was a bitter blow to him, but no more so than was the triumph of his evil-disposed cousin, Arnold Chelton.

The two enemies, as we may consider them, were nephews of old Jacob Morgan, the Third street broker, who at the time of our story, was lying upon a sick-bed, from which the physicians said he would never rise. Old age, and a fall from his carriage, which resulted in a broken limb, threatened to use him up.

Sam Morgan was old Jacob's brother's child, and until the age of fourteen, had resided with the broker, and it was generally conceded that he would succeed the old gentleman in the business, and in-

inherit the property; but one day a storm arose between them, and Sam was ordered to leave the house and never show his face within its doors again. And with this command, old Jacob added:

"Go thee into the world, Samuel, and think not to inherit my wealth. I shall give it to thee or to Arnold, thy cousin; which, only time can tell."

And thus were the two rival cousins left in doubt as to which one would be the successful inheritor.

Chelton, shortly after Sam's dismissal, was taken into the old man's home, though the broker would not admit him into his business. But it will be seen that he had a better chance to ingratiate himself into the old man's favor than Sam, whom the eccentric banker did not notice, if the two met face to face on the street.

But in this last blow the young Bohemian had received the bitterest experience of his young life.

He had known Louie Lester for some time, and his visits had ever been encouraged, as no doubt had those of Arnold Chelton, until he had grown to love the girl with all the strength of his young untutored heart.

"Chelton has won!" he mused, as he left the Lester mansion, and strode southward through the drizzling rain toward his quarters in Alaska street—for he had no means wherewith to pay for a car-ride. "He has won this point, and stands ten chances to my one of winning the other. Louie refused me, and by Heaven! no girl shall ever have that chance again. Henceforth the life of Sam Morgan, Bohemian, shall be changed—shall be devoted to the one sweet object after the death-blow to my love—revenge!"

"I will track and hunt Arnold Chelton through life, until he will be glad to die to escape me and that fair, false creature whom I have just left—I will make her love me as no other woman ever worshiped man; then I will spurn her in pay for the decision of to-day. Ah! if life looks bitter now, there will be a day when I shall triumph over mine enemies, and to attain that triumph, shall be the sole object of my future life."

He strode along, a moody expression upon his face, a bitter pain tugging at his heart. Boy love! How many of the men who go to make up the population of our continent, have not in the years of their age between twelve and twenty, experienced in a greater or lesser degree that first boy love for some school-girl friend or acquaintance? Very few, indeed! Looking back in after years, some will dwell upon those joyous love-hours, with feelings of regret that they are gone; others with bitterness, and others with amusement. Such is life.

With little pleasure did Sam Morgan now look back upon the dawning of his young love, and trace its happy course up to the present, when it had become blasted.

Only bitter pain was left him

He was a swift walker, and soon reached Market street, the greatest business thoroughfare of the city.

In crossing to the south side, he came in contact with a young man of about his own age, dressed in the same shabby style. There was a bright look upon his face, though proclaiming that he was the possessor of important news.

"Hello, Jack Jaunders!" cried Sam, grasping his hand, warmly. "What makes your face so beamer-iferous?"

"Because I've struck ile," was the reply, as Jaunders turned about and walked along with the other Bohemian. "There's an old covey inquiren' fer you: wants you to take charge of a steam yacht, an' run a pleasure excursion down the bay, to-morrow, for which you will get twenty dollars, spot cash, before startin'. Sed he heard yer ked handle a yacht, an' wanted just such a hand."

"Hurra! that is good news. Where's the ship fer sail?"

"At Prime street wharf."

"All right. Tell the old feller I'll be there at seven,

sharp. Now, I've got some important bizness elsewhere."

Then, after a few more words, the two boys shook hands, and separated.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SUCCESS OF VILLAINY—CREMATION.

SAM MORGAN hurried along down Market street to Eighth street, and thence down Eighth to South, into which busy thoroughfare he turned, a stern expression upon his handsome face.

"I've got to do it," he muttered, as he pushed through the crowds who, despite the unfavorable character of the weather, were improving the most of their day in shopping upon the great "cheap" street of the city. "There is no help for it, and she gave it to me, too. I would that my victual-con'ainer were not so empty, in which case I should not hesitate to wait, for to-morrow I'm to have a twenty-dollar job."

With head bowed and hands clinched, he tried to conceive some way out of the difficulty. But he could not. His larder was empty. Mother Maginn had refused him the loan of another crust, and he had not had a mouthful of nourishing food since the previous night.

"I shall have to do it," he repeated, as he turned into a little low shop, over the door of which swung three golden-hued balls. It was the flourishing establishment of Isaac Isaacs, pawnbroker, in whose possession one might look with the expectation of finding anything sought in the line of manufactured goods.

A sort of museum of curiosities was Isaacs's shop, and the old Jew had more valuables in it than anybody supposed he had.

He stood behind the counter, now, ready to sell or purchase, a bland smile upon his fat glossy countenance, his hands caressing each other patronizingly. He was about five feet six in height, with a great preponderance to flesh, his dimensions suggestive of the proprietorship of a first-class brewery.

"Goot-morning, Mr. Samuel!" he saluted, with a gracious bow. "Nice day out mit de rain, vere de beoples was so plenty, eh?"

"A confounded disagreeable day, I should say," Sam replied, with a sigh—"dubiously blue, when a fellow's out of rocks. What value will you put upon this, for a couple o' days?" He laid an exquisitely wrought gold locket and chain upon the counter, whose value must have been very large, for the German-Jew caught it up with an exclamation of wonder.

"Vere from you get dish, Samuel?" he questioned, gazing at the young Bohemian sharply. "I hope dot you wasn't pen stealing dose t'ings, eh?"

"No, sir; I'm no thief, poor though I am," Sam Morgan replied, proudly. "That locket was given me by my lady-love, but poverty necessitates that I must pawn it in order to get bread to stay my stomach. I expect to strike a streak of luck, to-day or to-morrow, and will redeem it, when I get money."

"Vell, Samuel, you vas a burty nice poy, only you vas pe lazier dan dunder and blitzen. Still a man somedimes vill get lazy, und vant ter shut up the shop vor a tear. Old Isaac Isaacs is one of dem Jewsharps. You vas a nice poy, Samuel, mit a headt on you like a parrel o' caraway brandy—sharp and keen—unt as I like ter do a goot turn sumdimes, I gif you ten tollars an' 'leven cents, unt you keep de watchet unt chain!"

"What! you don't mean to say you give this to me without holding the locket for security!" Sam exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Shust egzactly dose, Samuel. You vas a nice poy, unt dish vill get you a goot meal unt several 'schooners,' ofer at Shake Miller's!"

"But, see here! Suppose I never come back to settle this debt?" demanded Sam. "Didn't know an old Jewsharp like you'd trust a Bohemian with so much tin."

"Of course, Samuel, of course! If you vas not coom pack unt pay me, I gets him, nefer feer. Trust Isaac Isaacs fer dose."

"Just exactly what I intend to do, old man!" Sam replied, pocketing both the locket and the money. "Come and take a cigar!"

Isaacs, who was really an exceptionally fine fellow, for a pawnbroker, accepted with alacrity. At a neighboring store Sam purchased a couple of fragrant Havanas, and then, after shaking hands with his jolly benefactor, betook himself to the old tenement in Alaska street, and to his room in the garret.

How cheerless and desolate every thing looked now, since the light had died out of his heart—since he had no hope or plans for the future! Lonely and sad, with the pain of his first love's defeat bearing upon him, the young Bohemian threw himself face downward upon the cot-bed, and wept silently.

By and by a slight girlish figure, clad in calico, with a pretty little face of summer sunshine, and eyes of heaven's blue, glided softly into the room, but paused with dilated eyes, as she beheld the youth outstretched so still upon the cot.

"Sam!" she called, softly, but he gave back no answer. "He is asleep," she continued, drawing nearer, and seating herself upon the edge of the bed. "I wonder what the matter is?"

A pretty little picture was this angel of the attic—with a light, airy, graceful form, a round, sweetly-expressed face, blue eyes and golden hair, that fell in confusion over her fair white shoulders. She was the daughter of a California ranchman, but owing to the death of her mother, resided in Philadelphia, on the second floor of Mother Maginn's tenement, with a maiden aunt.

She had at once become on intimate terms with odd, handsome Sam Morgan, and although her little sixteen-year-old heart had never known the true beat of love, she held Sam very dear to her.

"Wake up, Sam!" she whispered, softly, stroking his disheveled hair. "It's Milly, come to call on you."

He turned wearily over, and his tear-stained face was raised toward her.

"You, Miss Lennox? What is there I can do for you?"

He was instantly himself, now, with a quick command of easy politeness and gentility—a very gentleman, in rags.

"What have you been crying about, Sam?" the girl asked, taking his hand in her dainty ones.

She did not shrink from him as she would from a stranger. They had been fast friends from the first of their acquaintance—a sort of brother and sister to each other—but no more, on Sam's part. She knew of his love for Louie, and, hard though it was, she never allowed herself to betray more than ordinary interest in him. But, there was a strange tenderness in her voice, now, which went straight to the embittered heart of the young Bohemian, like a dart.

"What have I been crying about, little attic angel?" he repeated, putting his right arm about her waist, and drawing her closer to him. "Well, I'll tell you. I got the grand boost, to-day, and have been blubbering about it like a great lubber that I am."

"The grand boost? I do not understand your meaning, Sam?"

"Don't? Well, in plainer language, my lady-love has skipped me, and is engaged to my cousin, Arnold Chelton."

"Oh! dear, is that true? I thought you were such fast lovers, and already engaged."

"No—never quite engaged. But I always calculated she belonged to me, and *vice versa* with her. But, Chelton 'popped' before I got there, and his gift of tongue won her over. I overheard the whole tale, and after he departed, I put in my vote, but it was refused—on account of tender age, I guess," with a bitter laugh.

"Do you really care so much, Sam? Are there not others you could be much happier with than with her?" Milly asked, slowly, toying with one of her apron strings.

He did not answer, just then—not until he had gazed steadfastly at the floor, and revolved the matter considerably in his mind.

"Perhaps there are those with whom I can be happier. Thank you for the suggestion, Milly; it opens up another idea of life to me. Milly, how old are you?"

"Sixteen, Sam."

"Sweet sixteen, eh? and those words are verified in you. You are a sweet, guileless little thing, worth any man's love. I am going to leave Philadelphia, soon, dear, and quit this Bohemian life. I was made for something better. Three years hence, Providence permitting, I shall return, and ask a certain little blue-eyed girl to be my bride."

"Oh! Sam; you don't mean a word of what you say."

"Yes I do mean just what I say, Milly. But, put no hope in it. Either you or I may be dead before that time. Do you care just a little for me, pet?"

"Oh! Sam, I love you," whispered she, impulsively throwing her arms about his neck, and bursting into tears. "I think I have loved you a great while, Sam."

"And I am very grateful and glad that I have one in this wide world to love me, you dear girl. I am your friend, Milly; I will not say that I possess anything like love for you, for you could not well believe me, when I am so fresh from an infatuation for another girl. But, wherever I go, I shall carry your sweet image with me, and think of this hour, when a cloud of sunshine has broken in to irradiate the darkness of my heart."

"Oh! Sam, I know I can teach you to love me. Take me, now, and make me yours, forever. I am not too young."

"Maybe not; some happy marriages occur among even younger people than you and I. But they are few. Besides, before I enter the state of matrimony, I have a mission to fulfill—a revenge to complete, and a fortune to make, such as will be counted by tens of thousands."

If Sam Morgan had ever dreamed of the trap that was being laid for him, he would have been on his guard, for he was a believer in dreams. But no warning of impending peril and death was granted him, and he sought out the wharf at Prime street, next morning, and found a steam-yacht of trim build tied up, with the gang-plank out. A man was pacing to and fro along the pier, and judging from his repulsive appearance, Sam put him down as a mate of some of the neighboring vessels, until the individual accosted him.

"Ahoy, thar! Be you the younker that I hired to work aboard the 'Sea-Gull,' to-day?" was the salute, in a gruff voice.

"Guess I'm the individual, if you're the snoozer that's got a convenient double-X!" Sam replied.

"Well, I'm your man. Goin' ter take a party of excursionists down the river to the bay, you see—crack, snap, too. Your place will be down in the engine-room, and mind you don't show your visage above decks the whole trip. Can you run an engine?"

"Shou'dn't wonder! Fork over your rocks, and I'll try at least. What's your handle?"

"My name's Captain Gueleppo!" was the response, "and here's your pay. Get you below now, and have steam up inside of half an hour."

Sam received the money, and went down into the engine-room, which was neatly fitted up with an upright boiler and engine, and everything convenient.

He set briskly to his task, for, Bohemian though he was, he knew how to work, though it was a thing he despised when he could exist by the labor of his

brain and sharpness of his wits. He started a fire, and soon had sufficient steam.

About eight o'clock he heard the passengers coming aboard, and a little later Gueleppo gave the order down the trap to let her slide.

Accordingly the yacht swung off into the Delaware, and setting her nose against a south wind, steamed away, plowing the waters into showers of spray.

During the trip to the bay Sam had his hands full, for he lacked a fireman, and the chopping of the river used the fuel rapidly. But as soon as they touched the bay the wind changed, and Gueleppo ordered fires out, while he substituted sail in the place of steam as a means of propulsion.

This gave the youth a chance to rest. Once or twice he was tempted to go above decks and see if there were any among the passengers that he knew, but he recollected the captain's orders and concluded it best to obey them.

Above decks Captain Gueleppo and Arnold Chelton were holding a close consultation.

"How many is there of you?" the Italian asked, glancing at the gay couples around and then at three or four sailors who were managing the yacht as it glided along over the beautiful bay.

"Six couples, including myself and young lady," was the reply.

"All right. Keep watch that no one comes below—I will go and arrange matters."

Sam Morgan was sitting upon a stool, looking out through a port-glass onto the bay, unsuspecting, when he was seized and held in a vise-like grasp, while a gag was thrust into his mouth.

In another moment he lay upon the floor helplessly bound, with the villainous Italian standing over him. He expected instant death, but the ruffian had another plan. He darted into the hold, and upset a barrel of tar upon the bottom and applied the match.

The next minute he sprang up-stairs to the deck.

"Fire! fire!" he shouted. "The engineer has fired the yacht and escaped. Lively, you lubbers! Lower away the long-boat and clear the deck. *You are above a mine of fire!*"

Instantly a panic of confusion ensued. The men swore and the women shrieked.

A boat was lowered and filled; the Italian captain was the last one to leave the deck of the ill-fated yacht.

By his orders the boat pulled swiftly toward the shore, two miles away.

In ten minutes the yacht was a mass of flames; then came an awful report—an explosion that scattered the burning timber far over the bay.

What was the fate of Sam Morgan? Imprisoned in the burning yacht, was it possible to escape? If so, how?

And when those in the long-boat reached land, Gueleppo found opportunity to take Chelton one side.

"It's done!" he chuckled. "The boy's in heaven or the other place ere this!"

"Yes, it's done," the guilty cousin replied, a whiteness of affright on his countenance. "The die is cast!"

CHAPTER V.

THE BROKER AND HIS NEPHEW—THE DEATH-SCENE.

THE unlucky excursionists from the ill-fated yacht found accommodations at a fishing hamlet near where they landed, and during the afternoon hailed a passing excursion steamer bound for Philadelphia. They were kindly taken on board, and arrived safely in the Quaker City after their unusual adventure. The success of the diabolical scheme of Chelton and his villainous ally had prospered beyond their most sanguine expectations, and no sooner were they in the city than Chelton paid the Italian a good round sum for his services.

Well could he afford to, for he had been summarily rid of one enemy whom he feared more than all

his other foes. What doubt could there be but what Sam Morgan had perished, either by the fire or explosion?

None, thought the scheming cousin, and he went his way rejoicing.

Four days later, in the grand bedchamber of his handsome residence on Walnut street, Jacob Morgan lay confined to his bed.

The room was elaborately furnished, and every comfort a peevish mind could crave, was surrounding the old broker.

At the time of our peep into the apartment, two are closeted there—Arnold Chelton and the sick man.

The former was sitting near the bed, listening apparently with deep interest to what the old man was saying.

"Yes, the doctors say I am improving and shall soon be upon my pegs again," he said, in his feeble, gasping voice. "If the limb only continues to mend, and no more inflammation sets in, I guess the old gent's constitution will carry him through. Uncle Jacob ain't a-goin' to give up yet, with gold at a dollar five, if he can help himself."

"I am glad to hear your resolution, and see that you still have a few chances for life left, uncle," Chelton replied. "I am sure it would grieve no one more than I, to see you die, when you ought to live a good score of years yet."

"I don't know about that, nephew. It's easy to say it, but I've had a strong distrust all along that you were only puffing the old man up, so as to keep on the right side of him, with an eye to the future. But, I've prepared everything, and them that does right shall be served right."

"Surely you would not accuse me of villainous motives, uncle?" Chelton exclaimed, reproachfully. "when I have never given you cause? I am surprised."

"Apparently!" the old man replied, rubbing his stubby chin, briskly. And the emphasis he put upon the word betrayed how far his belief extended. "Perhaps you have no designs upon my wealth—would be well pleased if I were to leave it to some one else than you?"

"Exactly!" returned the scheming nephew. "You can leave it all to charity, and I shall be just as well pleased. Hello! you black lubber, what do you want?"—this to a negro servant, whom Chelton had caught poking his head through the partly-opened door into the room.

"It's a worthless scamp Tom sent in his place to-day!" the broker explained. "If I were as limber as I used to be, I'd flog him for his meddlesomeness."

"He needs it," commented Chelton.

"By the way, nephew," the old man continued, "what would you say if I should tell you that I had left every cent to Sam Morgan?"

"I should say you were an old ignoramus, sir!"

"And why?"

"Because, my Bohemian cousin is dead—furnished food for the fishes in Delaware bay, four days ago!"

"What! Samuel dead?" the old man gasped, in horror.

"Exactly. Was blown up in a yacht explosion."

"I remember of hearing something about that fire and bu'st-up. The boy was suspected of setting the fire?"

"Yes, sir."

"And escaped?"

"We thought so, at first, but concluded not, afterward."

"We? You were along, then?"

"I was."

"I had a dream about that disaster," the old man murmured, aloud, but apparently unconscious that he did so. "I thought the boy was on the boat—down in the engine-room; that a big man attacked and bound him; then set fire to the boat, and all hurriedly left the boat but the boy."

"And he—did he escape?"

"I cannot tell!" the old man replied, with a cunning smile. "Only time will prove that, nephew. Ha! ha! what makes you so white?"

"Ahem! I was not aware that I am white!" Chelton replied, flushing.

"You were, for a moment. Perhaps it was only a rush of blood to your cowardly heart!"

So sudden did this thrust come, that Chelton leaped to his feet, with an oath.

"What do you mean?" he demanded, fiercely. "I mean to know!"

And he glided close to the bed, and stood over the helpless old man, a very devil shining in his black orbs.

"Nothing! nothing!" the broker gasped—"nothing, I assure you. It was only a slip of the tongue."

"Ah! yes, curse you, a slip of the tongue, eh? Well, look out that you have no more slips of a like nature. I'd as lieve choke the life out of you as not, if you were to anger me. But, come; it's time for your medicine."

He instantly threw off his savage aspect, and going to a bureau, on which were numerous bottles and vials, he poured out a teaspoonful of a darkish liquid, and approached the bedside.

"Here is your medicine, uncle!" he said; but he dropped the spoon from his hand, with a fierce anathema, as he beheld the woolly head and ebony visage of the colored servant again protruding through the door.

"Ten thousand furies, there's that accursed nigger again!" he cried, and whipping a revolver from his pocket, he sprung toward the door and out into the hall.

But, Cuffee was gone, out of sight, and it was useless to pursue him.

Chelton returned to the sick-chamber, and locked the door after him.

"Why do you do that?" the old broker demanded, nervously. "One would think you wish to murder me."

"I want to keep that impudent African out," was the response.

He poured out another dose of the medicine, and the sick man swallowed it.

"Ugh! what a nasty taste!" he said, with a shiver. "Are you *sure* it was the same I have been taking, nephew?"

"Perfectly sure," was the indifferent reply, as the schemer seated himself near the window with a book in his hand. "Don't think I would *poison* you!"

Presently the loud respirations of the old man proclaimed that he was asleep.

Then Chelton laid aside his book, an expression of triumph upon his face, an evil gleam in his sinister eyes.

"Now is my time!" he said in a shrill whisper, darting a swift glance toward the door to see that all was safe. "The old man sleeps, and I have it all in my own hands. First, the safe; then the last stroke that is to place me forever above pecuniary want. Aha! Arnold Chelton, you're a lucky dog!"

He gave a glance at the broker to make sure that he was really asleep; then advanced to a large safe that stood in a niche at the foot of the bed. It was one of Herring's Improved, with combination lock, and it required full an hour of attempts and silent curses on the maker before the schemer succeeded in opening it. It yielded at last, however, and the contents lay exposed before him. There were a few books; a package of documents, out of which the gambler selected one paper and replaced the others.

"This must be it," he said, breaking the seal of the envelope with nervous fingers. "Yes—Last Will and Testament of Jacob Morgan. Ha! by Heaven, the old man has left every dollar to me! And *he shall never live to alter this will!* A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Let me see: dated May

15th—that was day before yesterday—at half past ten o'clock, A. M. Ha! I remember now that a legal-looking gentleman called then. One called at four, but I do not think he was a lawyer. Probably this is the last will—there can be no doubt about that. Hello! what is this?"

A piece of paper had dropped from one of the folds of the will, and fluttered to the carpet.

With curiosity the gambler picked it up. In a straggling hand was written:

"ISAAC ISAACS, PAWNBROKER,

"Number — South street."

"Isaac Isaacs!" Chelton repeated slowly. "Jew pawnbroker. How came that in this will? What is the meaning? There surely is something in this; but what? I must call upon this Isaac Isaacs soon, and see what's to pay. But first, there is this other work. By Heaven! *shall* I do murder? How else can I attain my object? If I were to let him live, he would recover, or at least change this will, for he already suspects my connection with the death of young Morgan. No! he must die, and that quickly, and leave no tell-tale traces. The inhaling liquid the Italian gave me will answer the purpose."

With nervous hands he thrust the will back into the safe and closed the door. Then he staggered to his feet and crossed the room to the bureau.

"I am getting weak and cowardly when I should be dauntless," he muttered grimly, as he poured out and tossed off a brimming glass of brandy. "This will fix me in the trim for business."

Not one but four glasses of the fiery liquor he imbibed; then paced up and down the room, his head bowed, his breath coming in panting gasps.

"It must be done!" he finally muttered, bracing up, "and the sooner the better. The narcotic has put him in a sleep from which it will take hours to awaken."

He darkened the room by closing the inner blinds, then glared around him to see that no one was looking. The actions of the negro servant had made him suspicious.

Then he drew a bottle and a soft woolen rag from his pocket, saturating the latter with an odorless white liquor from the former.

The rag was then laid over the upturned face of the broker.

With a shudder the villain turned away when this work was completed and paced up and down the room with the tread of a cat.

He was violently agitated, and the hand that held the jeweled watch upon which he kept his eyes riveted trembled like an aspen leaf, while the pallor of his face was ghastly.

Ten moments elapsed, then he glided forward and removed the woolen cloth from the broker's face.

It was perfectly dry.

And the old man lay upon the bed a lifeless piece of human clay. The poison had done its work. Not the faintest breath or the twitching of a muscle betrayed the existence of a particle of remaining life.

"He is dead!" the murderer whispered shrilly—"dead, and I'll defy man or devil to detect human agency in the job. And I am now the master of this house—the sole undisputed heir of the Morgan heritage. Aha! Sam Morgan, I wish you well in your bed in the bottom of Delaware bay, but it would be greater satisfaction to me if you could know of my complete triumph!"

He stood like an overjoyed demon there in the presence of death, his face lit up by a malignant smile; his eyes glaring wildly.

Suddenly a sound near the door caused him to start with a horrified curse and turn his gaze in that direction. The door was still closed, but a sudden thought caused him to raise his eyes to the transom above.

And he did so just in time to catch a glimpse of the

woolly head and grinning, ebony face of the same negro who had twice before intruded, as it was being quickly withdrawn from view!

With an oath, Chelton again drew his revolver, sprung forward and unlocked the door, and leaped into the hall. The servant was nowhere to be seen, but could be heard clearing the stairs in a flying leap.

Chelton heard him leave the house, then, with a ghastly face, returned to the death-chamber, and removed the traces of his crime, after which he descended to the library.

The nurse, an elderly woman who had been procured on account of her worthiness and knowledge of medicine, arose upon his entrance.

"Did you come from the master, sir?" she inquired.

"Yes, I would not go up now. He is sleeping very nicely, and you might disturb him. He will probably need no more care until toward night."

"Do you think he is any better?"

"Oh! yes, I have strong hopes now of his ultimate recovery. He is a great deal more lively to-day. If his heart only carries through safe, there are great chances for him."

"His heart is affected then?"

"Oh! yes—has been for a number of years."

It so happened that in this the gambler spoke the truth.

After awhile he left the mansion, and walked down into town. His brain was heated, and it took a bottle of champagne at Nash's to still his nerves.

"Curse that negro!" he growled. "I'll find out of Tom, who he was, and old Gueleppo will have another job. By the way, I think I'll hunt up this Isaac Isaacs, and see what connection he has with Morgan's will."

He left the restaurant, and walked down Tenth street to South, as if the business he was on was of great importance. From Tenth he walked east several squares on South, and finally came to a little low building, upon whose windows the words

"LOAN OFFICE"

were painted in a variety of colors. But the place was untenanted. All the stock and fixtures had been removed, and a piece of board, nailed to the door, bore the following straightforward announcement:

"Hardt times. Sold out, paidt mine debts, unt gone West. ISAAC ISAACS."

This was all, and inquiry proved it was correct. The Jew had "pulled out," several days before.

And what secret did he possess relating to the Morgan will case?

CHAPTER VI.

A FORTUNE-TELLER'S PREDICTION—A YOUTHFUL SHARP.

ARNOLD CHELTON returned to the Walnut street mansion of the murdered Jacob Morgan, in an unenviable frame of mind.

"It may be all right, about this sudden clearing out of that rascally Jew!" he muttered, with a savage frown, "but it does not appear so. There is something back of it all, which I cannot understand, and that it threatens my future peace of mind, I am almost certain. The Jew knows about that will, else why his name on the accompanying slip of paper. Does he possess some knowledge concerning my uncle's affairs, which he thinks to make money out of in the future?"

Arrived at the mansion, he found everything in a state of confusion. The nurse had gone to the broker's room shortly after Chelton quitted the house, and found the old man dead, to all appearances. Instantly she had fled and alarmed the household, which consisted of a coachman and four servants besides herself; then doctors had been sent for, and likewise the coroner.

"Ha! what does this mean? Can it be—" he gasped, and then the hypocrite burst into tears,

which appeared genuine, as he caught sight of the band of crape.

"Yes, young man, the old gentleman has gone and left us, at last," one of the physicians replied, solemnly.

"When did he die?"

"Some hours ago. The nurse states that you had been gone only a few minutes, when she ran up to his room to see if he still slept. And she found that he slept the sleep that knows no wakening."

"He was resting so peacefully when I left him, that I thought no danger of leaving him alone," Chelton said, with apparent humbleness of spirit. "What do you think was the cause of his sudden death?"

"Heart disease, without a doubt. A quick clogging of thick blood through the returning valves of his heart did the job. Nothing more than we have been looking for."

Chelton went to his room, where he locked himself in for the rest of the day.

He did not wish to look upon the victim of his diabolical crime, lest some way he should betray his guilt.

Two days later the funeral took place from the church at Nineteenth and Walnut streets. It was a grand affair, handsomely conducted, and a long line of carriages followed the remains of the unfortunate broker to their last resting-place in Woodland Cemetery.

Arnold Chelton did not go, being confined to his bed with a racking headache. But it so happened that he was able to be about, shortly after the funeral cortege had gone across the blue waters of the Schuylkill.

The funeral occurred upon Friday, and upon the following Monday, the new heir to all the wealth of Jacob Morgan, filed the will found in the safe, before the Registrar of Wills, in accordance with the laws of city and county.

As there was no other will of a later date found upon file, Arnold Chelton had undoubtedly succeeded in his heinous scheme; had triumphed and won, even though two lives had been sacrificed in the struggle. He was now Arnold Chelton, "millionaire," where before gambler had occupied the place of "millionaire."

Flushed and jubilant was he over his victory, and first he went to the house on North Eleventh street, and made known his good fortune to Louie Lester.

She received him with less impetuosity than before, but his gold-blinded eyes, and champagned brain were incapable of recognizing the fact.

"Ah! my peerless darling!" he cried, imprisoning her in his arms, and kissing her red lips, "you are not coming to a beggar, now, but to a man whose wealth can place you at the head of a criticism social world, there to shine resplendent as its queen."

"But I do not care for wealth, society and distinction, Arnold!" the young girl replied, gently returning his caresses. "I should be just as contented and happy if you were a poor laboring man."

"Which shows what an angel you are!" he replied, persuasively. "But as long as we have wealth, why should we not enjoy it? Life is but short, at the longest lease, and a person needs to improve his or her time to derive any satisfaction from it."

"Do you ever turn your thoughts to God, and the necessity of a reformation, in order to derive future salvation, Arnold?"

"Bah! no!" he replied with a shrug. "Time enough for that, yet!"

But way down in his heart the arch-villain wondered if there really was time for him to make his peace with God—wondered if the great Master could ever forgive him for all his crimes.

"Has Sam Morgan been here since the yacht burned, Louie?"

"No. Poor Sam! what a terrible fate was his! Arnold, I had a terrible dream, last night, and about him, too. Do you know what a Phenix is?"

"A Phenix?" he repeated, with a start. "I believe it was a fabulous bird of olden time reputed to rise from its ashes, after death. Of later years, however, it has been applied to detectives, fire departments, and brands of cheap domestic cigars."

"Somewhere I have read of a Phenix, in a novel—startling in action, but highly improbable. I dreamt of Sam Morgan as a Phenix, rising out of the wreck of that burning yacht—not as Sam Morgan, the young Bohemian, but as a huge serpent, with terrible fangs and wickedly gleaming eyes."

Chelton shuddered, and his dusky countenance became shadowed with a grayish pallor.

"Some horrible nightmare," he muttered. "You should be careful what you eat before retiring."

At this juncture a young lady friend of Miss Lester's came hurrying into the parlor, her face flushed and eyes sparkling.

"Oh, Louie!" she exclaimed, excitedly, "would you believe it? There is an old fortune-teller who was in at our house, and told all our fortunes, and such jolly fun we had that I ventured to bring her in here," and the girl turned and motioned to an old woman who stood by the door.

She came hobbling into the parlor, leaning heavily upon her crutch and cane, a veritable mass of clinging rags and filth, with an old veil tied over her bonnet and face. This effectually screened her face. She sunk upon the sofa, with some muttered thanks, and Miss Ardner turned to Louie:

"Now, Louie, you go first, and learn your destiny, and your gentleman friend next. I assure you, it is really amusing."

"Perhaps we had better retire?" suggested Chelton, and accordingly he gave Miss Ardner his arm into the adjoining room.

After they were gone, the fortune-teller took Louie's fair hand in her coarsely-gloved one, and gazed through the eye-holes in the veil at the delicate veins and cords.

"Your life thus far has been through sunshine, with little to grieve, except the parental loss. You have had two lovers—one you have discarded; the other you have kept. One was a gentleman—the other a double-dyed villain. You have chosen the latter. You have trouble looming up in the future, but it is too far off for me to indicate. You will grow to love this gentleman lover, but your love will be in vain. Beware of the Phenix!"

Louie started to her feet with a cry of alarm.

"My dream! my dream!" she gasped.

She managed to stagger out into the hall, and motioned for Chelton to go in. He did so, not noticing her agitation. He put no faith in the trashy ravings of so-called fortune-tellers, but yielded now to gratify his curiosity. He knelt before the old ragged creature in disgust and put forth his right hand—a hand which manual labor had never roughened or soiled.

The fortune-teller gazed at the cords and intricate veins for some time without speaking. But finally she said:

"Yours has been a checkered existence—a record more criminal than Christian. You have led a wild, sensual life—have gambled, and dealt extensively in bad money and with bad women. You have the crime of *murder* on your soul. Nay! do not start; it is not my purpose to betray you. You may, by skillful plotting, save your neck from the *hangman's noose*. But not for any great length of time. In the future looms up an obstacle, and this obstacle is waiting for you. I cannot say just where you will meet it, but meet it you surely will. It is not a ghost, but a living dragon that has teeth like needles—a Phenix that rose from the ashes of the ill-fated yacht, 'Sea Gull.'"

Chelton staggered to his feet with a frightful curse.

"Enough of this cursed nonsense!" he cried, his face whiter than the marble statue near which he stood. "Get out of the house at once, or I'll make business for the coroner!" and he drew and cocked a revolver, as if to execute his threat.

"Very well, I go, Mr. Chelton," the old woman replied, hobbling toward the door with alacrity, "but as a friend, I caution you to beware. There are deadfalls for the wicked between here and heaven leading down into hell. Look out that you don't stumble into them. And some time, as you are striding along the highway of life, if you see painted upon the fence by the roadside, in boldly conspicuous letters, the words:—"Through to Death,"—think of the words of the old fortune-teller, and look out for the—*Phenix*!"

Then the old creature darted into the hall, just in time to escape a bullet from Chelton's revolver. Louie showed her from the house: then returned to the enraged man in the parlor. "What is it, dear?" she demanded, stopping him, and gazing up into his pallid face.

"Why did you allow that accursed hag in here?" he growled. "She is possessed of the devil!"

"Don't mind her, Arnold. She is doubtless some old vagrant whose mind is wandering."

"Bah! she hits too close at the truth for that. She knows more about my private affairs than I like."

"Have you any secrets from me, then?"

"Oh! no; of course not. But I must now leave you, my dear; I have important business to attend to in town, and will call again, this evening. You will be ready to be married to-morrow, I suppose?"

"What! so soon after your uncle's death, Arnold?"

"Yes. It need make no difference. A week hence I shall perfect arrangements for our trip across the continent. And after we have thoroughly done the western continent, we will visit the old world."

"Oh! dearest, that would be so nice. I am tired of staying in Philadelphia year after year."

"And I too, and think this trip may be beneficial to us both. I will call with a minister and a male friend, to-morrow, at two. You can invite Miss Ardner to be present, if you choose. So good-by, sweetheart."

He kissed her, and then left the mansion. He really left in quest of the old fortune-teller, but as he could see or learn nothing of her, on reaching the street, he walked to Tenth street and rode to the Morgan House on Walnut street.

That afternoon he received a call from Jack Jaunders, Bohemian.

The youth was a second Sam Morgan, for coolness and sharpness.

Somehow these Bohemian youths of our great cities are endowed with an unusual amount of brains, pluck and laziness, and if properly cultivated and nourished develop into our sharpest, shrewdest citizens.

This Jaunders was no exception to the rule. He lacked not for the essentials of the profession—"cheek," "brass," and insolent familiarity, and came striding into the presence of the millionaire, with a free-and-easy independence, characteristic of his nature.

"Mr. Arnold Chelton, I believe!" he observed, pausing near the aforesaid individual, and resting one foot upon the crimson velvet sofa.

"I believe so," was the reply. "Is there not room upon the floor for your feet, young man?"

"No. I reckon not, where yours is about, old covey!" Jaunders decided. "Didn't come here to be bossed, neither. Come to make inquiries. You were on that yacht when she 'sploded?"

"No. I was in a boat, making for shore, at the time."

"Ah! yes. Where was my pard, Sam Morgan, at this time?"

"On the boat, it is believed. He set fire to the yacht, and must have crept into the hold out of sight, and been blown to atoms."

"Think he was?"

"I haven't a doubt of it."

"What a pity you and that old snoozer, Gueleppa, warn't along. Think Sam Morgan's dead, then?"

"I do, most assuredly. Why?"

"Oh! I wanted to be sure. In case he's a white-winged flutterer, I've got some bizness with you, by and by. Take an optical inventory of my phiz, so that you may remember me. My name is Jaunders—Jack Jaunders, at your service!"

With which announcement the young sharp whirled on his heel and allowed the servant to show him out, while he left Chelton wondering if there was a menace implied in his words, or if it was only a freak of a curious mind and character.

CHAPTER VII.

A CRIME TO HIDE A CRIME—WORDS OF MENACE ON THE BACK OF A PROGRAMME.

THAT was an afternoon of events at the Morgan mansion.

Not long after the departure of Jack Jaunders, the young Bohemian friend of poor Sam Morgan, another visitor was ushered into the presence of Arnold Chelton, as he sat in the grand parlor of the noble residence he had so foully won.

This individual was old and silver-haired, with furrowed features of an odd mold, a bent form, and eyes that had a strange gleam, through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles.

"M. Sardou," was the name upon the card the servant had handed Chelton, and the young millionaire gazed at the stranger sharply.

"Well, sir?" he interrogated, knocking the ashes from his cigar.

"Well!" M. Sardou assented, accepting an uninvited seat. "Mr. Arnold Chelton, I suppose?"

"I suppose so, along with yourself, sir," Chelton replied. "Why, pray?"

"Why?" M. Sardou scratched his white head a moment perplexedly. "Well, you see, I am hunting for an Arnold Chelton, and you are the man, I expect."

"I guess not," the millionaire said, carelessly. "There are three others in town by that name."

"Eh! there are? Didn't find only one name of the kind in the Directory, which led me to the conclusion that you were the individual."

"What do you want of Arnold Chelton, then?"

"Oh! that depends somewhat on circumstances. Have you or did you ever have a cousin by the name of Sam Morgan? He was a Bohemian sort of chap, I believe."

"Certainly not. We Cheltons have no kith nor kin of that name."

"Ah! then, perhaps I am mistaken. But, maybe you once knew a beautiful girl by the name of Carrie Moore. She was enticed from home and ruined by an arrant knave by the name of Chelton, and then assassinated at an ill-house in this city by her betrayer."

"Ha!" Chelton exclaimed, retaining his composure remarkably well, "can it be that he was so foolish? I did not think him so base a criminal."

This was spoken as if to himself, and M. Sardou caught at it eagerly.

"What say?" he queried, sharply.

Chelton affected a violent start.

"Ah! what was I saying?" he muttered, apologetically. "You are a detective, eh?" to M. Sardou.

"Perhaps," the little Frenchman answered.

"Then your race is run. Death to you and your fraternity!" Chelton cried jubilantly, and in another instant the little Frenchman lay outstretched upon the carpet, insensible. He had not fallen by Chelton's hand, but by the hand of Guiseppe Gueleppo, Chelton's treacherous Italian tool, who had entered unobserved, and dealt the detective a terrible blow with a blackjack.

"Is he dead?" Chelton demanded, in a whisper, as he rose from his chair and drew near, with blanched face.

"Deader'n a door nail, I'll bet you the drinks!" grinned the Italian, with a chuckle. "You said death, and I give him a stinger. I'll see if any life remains."

He knelt upon the rich crimson carpet, and placed

his hand over the detective's heart. There was not a throb nor the least sign of a pulsation.

"He is dead!" Gueleppo said.

"Dead! Great God! I did not mean for you to kill him. What shall we do with him? He is a detective, and if he does not return, inquiry will be made for him. Then what?"

"Exactly. We've put our foot in it for once!" the ruffian growled, locking the door and seating himself.

"The fellow's name is Sargent, and he was as sharp as a weasel. No doubt his mission here is known at head-quarters, unless he has undertaken to handle the case alone. In the former case, your only plan is to hide the corpse, and clear out. If we can first get rid of the body, I will find out if it was known that Sargent came here, and report. Prepare yourself to leave town for a while, anyhow; it will be safer. I am going to take French leave myself soon."

"But, here is this accursed tell-tale body; how shall we dispose of that?" Chelton's face grew ghastly as he gazed at the fast stiffening form. "It must not be found here, by heaven!"

"No; it would not be well for you. Is there a sewer connection in under this house?"

"Yes, yes; by Jove! I had not thought of that. There is a large trap in the cellar, which opens directly into a sewer main."

"Then we are all right. Send all your servants off for a holiday, and during their absence we will dispose of this corpse. The sewers are full of water, from this deuced rain, and will quickly carry away the evidences of our crime. Leave me to manage the rest!"

Later, Chelton dismissed all the servants for half a holiday, and when they were all gone from the mansion, he and Gueleppo carried the body of the murdered detective down into the cellar, and pitched it through the man-trap into the sewer, below, thus forever, as they supposed, hiding the evidence of their crime.

Then they reascended to the parlor, and Gueleppo took his departure, promising to call again during the day, with information concerning the detective.

He came, toward evening.

"It's all right, at present," he said. "The force have no definite knowledge of Sargent's whereabouts, and it looks to me as though they may never have any. So far, so good. When his body is found, it will most likely be found in the bottom of the Delaware, keeping company along with that of your cousin."

"I am glad the thing is through with. Here is some money, and when I leave Philadelphia I want you to be close at hand, a sort of unrecognized body-guard, you see, for which you will receive liberal pay!" Chelton said, handing the Italian a roll of bills, and motioning for him to depart.

The following afternoon saw the scheming millionaire in the Lester mansion, closeted with pretty Louie in the drawing room, waiting for the arrival of the minister, who was to make them man and wife. He had arranged matters satisfactorily with young Heston, the law-student, and was soon to entrap another victim into his meshes.

Below, a number of Miss Lester's friends were waiting in the parlor, for, though it was against Chelton's will, she was desirous of having a few friends about her.

"And, now, my treasure!" the villain said, drawing her to him, as they were seated upon the sofa. "The hour has come when we are to be made one and inseparable. What a comfort and a joy it is to me to realize that you are mine—all mine own, sweet darling. What a pleasure it will be to me to devote my whole life and wealth to the sole object of furthering your happiness!"

"Yes, Arnold," the fascinated girl whispered, nestling closer to him, "I shall be very, very happy if you are only as true and good to me as you have

promised. Will you be so? Will you always be faithful to me?"

"Pshaw! child; were the Cheltons ever unfaithful to their wives? No, indeed! You may put your implicit trust in me, and never fear that I will neglect or wrong you."

Ah! had Louie Lester been able to have looked ahead into the future!

The arrival of the minister was presently announced, and the bride and groom were ushered into the parlor by their attendants.

Chelton gazed sharply at the minister, and an oath rose upon his lips as he perceived that it was not Charley Heston, the law-student—not he, even in disguise—but a clerical-looking individual, in white tie, and with a grave countenance.

The question was—was he a legal minister? This was the problem, but there was no time for hesitancy now.

They took their places, and the marriage ceremony was pronounced, according to the usual forms.

The last words of the clergyman had been spoken, when suddenly there rung through the room, in a clear, ringing voice, the words:

"BEWARE! the serpent is coiled to strike—the Phenix has risen from the ill-fated yacht's ashes; the Bohemian lives in the Phenix, while the fishes nibble upon the bones of Sam Morgan in the bottom of the Delaware. M. Sardou has taken a contract to build a new sewer; the spirit of Carrie Moore cries for revenge; the Phenix will see that she has it! Beware, Arnold Chelton, lest you tread upon the serpent that is destined to be your death when you least think of it! Beware, Louie Chelton, for the love you refused shall yet burn a hole in your heart! Beware!"

In bewilderment and greatly astonished, the guests listened to the terrible wedding curse, emanating from some source unknown—words of menace, in a voice that was stern and accusing.

With a shriek, the bride fell into Chelton's arms in a dead faint, and in a moment, with a face deathly white, he staggered beneath her weight and dropped senseless upon the carpet, bearing her with him.

All was confusion. The bride was carried to her room and cared for by her lady friends, while Chelton was handled by the three or four gentlemen present.

Both parties were soon restored to consciousness, however, and after awhile the guests departed and they were left alone. Louie wept incessantly and Chelton's brow was clouded by a terrible frown.

"Do you know," he said hoarsely, "that a conviction is being forced upon me that Sam Morgan is *not* dead?"

"Not dead!" the young wife exclaimed with a start.

"Not dead," he answered, rising and pacing up and down the room. "By some miracle he has escaped the doom I—the doom we supposed to have overtaken him and is hounding us, thinking to destroy our happiness. But that shall not be. I will give the matter over into the hands of the detectives and they'll soon end his pretty pranks."

"But, dear Arnold, what did he mean by his references to the Phenix, M. Sardou and Carrie Moore?"

"Cursed if I know. Some contriving of his evil brain. But I must hasten into town and give this matter into the hands of the proper authorities. I want no more of this—Ha! a ring at the door; what is it, James?" to the servant who entered.

"A gift of flowers, sir, as a boy brought, an' sed it was for the new-married couple, sir," replied the servant, depositing an elegant floral offering in the shape of a basket, in Chelton's hands, and then retiring with a courtesy.

But Louie screamed, and the next moment the millionaire hurled the basket to the floor with a ter-

rible execration, as though it were some venomous reptile.

For in the center of the basket, woven in garlands of moss, were these three words:

"THROUGH TO DEATH!"

"A thousand curses!" was the impious exclamation of Chelton, as with the toe of his boot he spurned the basket and contents violently from him. "This is more of the work of that accursed scapegrace, rascal and cousin of mine!"

He rushed into the hall, seized his hat and out into the street he went on his mission of vengeance against Sam Morgan. He went to the detective bureau and offered a hundred dollars reward for the apprehension of the young Bohemian, who he was sure now was not dead.

He then returned to Louie, feeling somewhat relieved. The Lester and Morgan mansions were shut up, and the bride and groom prepared for their tour of the continent, sparing no expense to have all arrangements satisfactorily completed.

Before their departure, however, they went one evening to the Academy of Music to witness the opening performance of a noted songstress, it being her first appearance in Philadelphia.

Chelton chose a couple of seats in the circle, first row, looking directly off onto the stage.

The house was packed with an enthusiastic audience, for the performance was of the best; but during its progress an incident occurred, sufficient to deprive the millionaire and his young wife of their part of enjoyment.

A programme, dexterously twisted to a point, came whirling down from one of the galleries, and struck upon Mrs. Chelton's lap. Chelton picked it up; then swore outright, as he saw the words penciled upon the back:

"The Phenix—is abroad—M. Sardou in the sewer—Carrie Moore in heaven—Arnold Chelton in—hell!"

CHAPTER VIII.

HAUNTED! HAUNTED!—ON A MISSISSIPPI RIVER BOAT. —THE REBELLION RELIC.

ONE year and a half later: the scene is changed.

It is night in the great land of the South—night upon the bosom of that queen of Western rivers, the ever-moving, majestic, stately Mississippi, over whose surface a brilliant midsummer's moon is throwing a flood of silvery light, illuminating the path for a small but stanch pleasure steamer that is plowing its way northward, through a scene of exceeding beauty.

Along the shores, here and there, are grand old mansions and plantations, which carry one's mind back to those halcyon days before the Rebellion, negro shanties along the shore, and occasionally sounds of sweet negro melody floating out across the water, perhaps to the accompaniment of an old banjo; here are landings and boat-houses—there a broad lawn shaded by stately trees, sloping down to the water's edge, with a family group assembled on the shore, watching the boat glide by; all presented in a weirdly beautiful panorama as beheld under the radiance of the great harvest moon, as she soared like a ball of molten gold in the blue starry heaven, which looked an emblem of peace and purity.

Aboard the steamboat all was even less active than the night ashore, except it be the two busy men who managed things down in the engine-room. The captain paced a regular beat upon the lower deck, while on the upper deck several ladies and gentlemen were easily disposed, languidly watching the scene around them. Ladies of great social refinement and culture, and men of wealth and distinction, were there, forming a selected pleasure-party, whom Arnold Chelton was proud to bear in his boat—for this was the millionaire's boat, chartered to convey himself and party as far up the river as inclination might lead them.

Chelton has just come from the cabin in company with a natty-dressed gentleman, with iron-gray hair and an immense black beard, which nearly hid the features.

Chelton is seemingly unchanged; wealth is characteristic in his faultless attire—his suit of spotless duck, and panama hat, being of the finest, and the diamonds that gleamed in his shirt-front and upon his fingers, being worth a king's ransom.

"Hello! here they come!" cried one of the Southerners, lounging on the deck, as the two men came up the stairs.

"Which won, colonel?"

"The Virginian won, of course," growled Chelton, savagely. "I believe he or the cards are infatuated."

"Bah! it's only science against bull-head luck, my dear friend," replied the Virginian. "You city gamblers are no match against we old bucks who have boated it so many years on the dear old Mississippi. Why, sir, there are men still living, who can beat me so quick that I'd have to shut my eyes up. There used to be an old fellow living along the line here, somewhere—think it was at the next wood station—who peddled fruit for a living. 'Rebellion Relic,' he called himself, and many a time he's fleeced some so-called sharps out of their spondulics. He plays faro by three systems, and if he fails to get the run of the board by one system, he does not fail to get it on the other two."

"I'd like to see that man," said Colonel Dillion, a rich Southern gentleman. "He must have some exceeding funny anecdotes to relate of his experience; and then, I'd like to tip him a game."

"Guess he don't play any more, colonel, but he is as full of yarns as a hornet is of honey. That's the reason they call him Old Relic."

In the mean time, words were passing between Arnold and Mrs. Chelton, as they seated themselves more in retirement from the rest.

"You said you wouldn't gamble any more, Arnold!" accused the little pale-faced woman, who had but a year and a half ago been blooming, courted Louise Lester; "and yet, you have just come from the saloon, with that insolent Dice Rutherford, where you have been losing heavily for hours on a stretch."

"Humph! another curtain lecture, eh?" the husband sneered, sarcastically. "Perhaps I've lost some, but that does not signify that it's any of your business. You are meddlesome."

"Oh! Arnold!" she sobbed, resting her head upon his shoulder, "why are you so harsh to me? Why will you not be good to me, as you promised ere we were married?"

"Mind your business, and stop interfering with mine, and I will treat you all right. There! there! Cry up your sniffing, or you'll attract attention. Don't be a baby, just because you know how. See; the boat is running in to yonder shore, to load up afresh with wood. Look at the darkies upon the pier."

Thus he drew Louie's attention upon other things, which gave him an opportunity to slip away from her.

Ah! not a happy life was hers, with Arnold Chelton. Their honeymoon had been blissful, as the word goes, but after that a change came. He grew stern and harsh toward her; neglected her, but was violently jealous if another person spoke to her. He drank and gambled to excess, and fast was using the ready cash he had inherited from old Jacob Morgan. Fortunately the real estate and Government bonds he had not offered to touch, except the income from the latter.

And Louie! She grew to fear him, and, when her entreaties failed, to loathe him. Ah! many, many times did the poor girl-wife weep in secret over her refusal of the true love of poor Sam Morgan. Nor did she ever forget the threat of the Phenix.

The boat at last touched the shore, where whites and blacks were gathered, indiscriminately, and the

work of loading began. It was a short job, for the boat's storage capacity was but small, and a dozen stout bucks were engaged in the loading. At last the job was complete, and the boat swung off.

A short time afterward an old man hobbled up onto the upper deck, where the excursionists were still seated, for none could bear the thought of seeking the close state-rooms, on such a balmy night as this.

A queer old customer was this new arrival. He was bent and apparently decrepit, for he leaned upon two crutches, and every move seemed to cause him a grunt for the pain occasioned. He was clad in rags; his hair and bushy beard were of a snowy white; spectacles were upon his eyes, and a slouch hat drawn down over his forehead to meet them. In his hand he carried a basket of large oranges, and these he began to pass in front of the excursionists, as if to tempt their appetites.

"Nice oranges, shentlemen!" he said, in a strange, squeaky voice. "Sweet as honey from a maiden's lips."

"Hillo!" Dice Rutherford, the gambler, exclaimed; "do my eyes deceive me, or is it really old Rebellion Relic, still at his old calling?"

"Guess it's ther old man, sir," replied the peddler, with a chuckle. "D'ye remember the time, Dice, when we used ter sail on these here waters, a few years ago, when things were real lively, I tell ye? Oranges gents. Ycs, we used to hev sum pritty tough times them days, no mistake. We hed Southern gentlemen, then, who war free with their money, and would jes's lieve shute as drink."

"They call me Rebellion Relic, gents, because I went thru ther war without gettin' a scratch. Oranges, sir; sweet as encrusted honey from a young gal's lips, I do assure you!"

And a fine sale the old man found for his basket of fruit, soon disposing of it at a fair price.

Chelton purchased a round dozen, as he was very fond of them.

"Now, Relic!" said Dice Rutherford, as the old man finished, "can't you give us a little of your experience? I know you're chuck-full of anecdotes, and we are dying for something to break the monotony."

"Hey? anecdotes, is it? Wal, Dice, old boy, ther old man ain't as good as he used to be—lost his memory, after he got blown up wi' that steamboat explosion several years ago; memory went on up toward the skies, while Relic come down in a sugar plantation."

"That gentleman yonder, Dice!" pointing to Arnold Chelton, "reminds me of a feller w'at used to run upon the river, whose name war Felix Gaines. He was a notorious old gambler and rowdy—called him Wild Bill, fer short—and probably he'd done more butcherin' in his time than Bill Hickox, out West. Once upon a time he bu'sted a feller's spire, in New York, an' chucked him down inter a sewer, where he was found by a couple of rat-catchers, an' fetched to life. Oh! he war a terrible cuss, I tell ye. Sum war afraid of him, for it was calkylated he could lick anything that trod ther deck."

"One night he cum aboard ther boat with a crowd of passengers, an' I see'd thar was blood in his eye, for he strid up an' down deck like a mad bull. No one sed nuthin' ter him, fer he'd 'a' shot 'em, like's not, fer interferin'. He war savage, an' bymeby he began cussin'. We didn't kno' the cause, till we see a boat put out from ashore, an' in a few minutes a half-dozen planters an' a gal came aboard. All war armed wi' revolvers an' whips, and it looked as if some one war goin' ter git dressed out in shape."

"When Wild Bill see'd 'em he swore a lot of Bible names, an' he sed, sez he:

"'Heer I am, you devils, if it is Wild Bill ye want!'

"'Which it is,' sed one of the planters, and then they rushed upon him, bound him hand an' foot an' each give him a whack with the whip, an' each put seven bullets inter his carcass!"

"Horrible!" exclaimed one of the ladies. "I never knew such horrible crimes were perpetrated in the river-boats, bad as were their reputations. It seems incredible, sir!"

"But ar' nevertheless a fact, ma'am. But Wild Bill warn't dead, not by a long shot. Phenix-like he riz frum his bleedin' ashes, an' ther last planter hed only just left the boat w'en Bill sung out:

"*'I'll bet five hundred dollars I can beat any man aboard at a square game o' eucher!*"

In the laughter that followed, Old Relic slipped from the deck and went below, followed by Dice Rutherford.

"Hello!" presently exclaimed one of the company—"here's a novelty. That old skinflint has cheated me by selling me a hollow orange. Ha! and as I live there is a paper inside of it. What trick is this?"

Instantly a curious crowd gathered around him, and he drew forth the crumpled paper and spread it out:

"Ha! strange reading, I must say: '*The Phenix liv's, while Sam Morgan lies dead in the bottom of the Delaware!*'"

As the words were spoken, the face of Arnold Chelton and his wife became deathly white, and while the latter sunk upon the floor insensible, the former drew a revolver, and sprung down the stairs to the lower deck.

The first man he encountered was Gueleppo, the villainous Italian, who occupied the position of temporary captain of the boat for the trip. Like a faithful dog, this man had followed the fortunes of Arnold Chelton, since their departure from New York, in which time they had traveled extensively in the Eastern and Southern States. Well paid for his services, he could well afford to work for the interest of his employer.

"The old tramp—what has become of him?" Chelton demanded, excitedly. "Quick! speak before I kill you!"

"Kill me?" growled Gueleppo, grimly. "Reckon it wouldn't pay you to do that, Cap. What about the tramp?"

"Where is he?" roared the millionaire, nearly beside himself with rage.

"Who—the old orange peddler?"

"Yes! yes!"

"He's gone ashore in a boat which he had towin' alongside."

"And the gambler—Dice Rutherford?"

"Went with him!"

"Ten thousand furies! Why did you let them escape? One or the other of them was the accursed boy we tried to burn in the yacht. He is alive and dogging me, wherever I go."

"Sam Morgan alive?"

"Yes, alive, and hounding me down to death!"

Then the millionaire related about the paper inside the hollow orange, and how the Relic had hinted at their sewer secret, in his anecdote.

"But who is this Dice Rutherford?"

"I know not; probably some detective whom the young devil has employed as an accomplice."

"Which is bad for us. In case of your death this property you inherited goes to young Morgan eh?"

"Yes, I suppose so; in reality he has a better right to it than I."

"Then I should hate to be in your tracks, that's all. He'll lay for you and cut your throat from ear to ear."

And with this comforting assurance, the captain turned away.

Chelton went into the cabin and drank several glasses of brandy, after which he paced up and down the floor, his hands clinched, and eyes gleaming.

"I am haunted!" he said, in a hoarse voice—"haunted, and by what? Is it possible that Sam Morgan still lives, and that there is such a thing as a Phenix? By heaven, this accursed mystery will drive me mad—mad!"

CHAPTER IX.

AT BULL'S RUN—THE DUTCH PAWNBROKER—A JEW THAT KNOWS HIS BIZ—THE WANDERING MINSTREL—THE SCHEME AND ITS SUCCESS.

BULL'S RUN!

Not the famous battle-ground, whereon so many brave hearts fell, but a little Western mining-town of no particular excitement or interest. Travelers and artists occasionally wander hither, because of the gigantic mountains and wild scenery of its surroundings; but for mining-interests, Bull's Run was literally dead and a thing of the past. There was a small amount of placer mining done upon the flats by the slow-going inhabitants of the little town; a stage with mails came and departed twice a week; a new arrival was viewed with curiosity by the uncouth citizens.

The place probably numbered two hundred souls, and shanties for the accommodation of these humans were unevenly scattered about without any attempt at streets. There were one or two taverns, a smithy, and a school-house; also one dry-goods store and a pawnbroker's shop.

Just about a year after the occurrence of the events last narrated, the stage one day brought to Bull's Run a trio of strangers—the Cheltons and their body-servant, the villainous Gueleppo.

Their arrival created considerable excitement among the inhabitants. What did it mean?

No tourists so richly dressed as this party had ever graced the town before; none were ever likely to again, for wild scenery could be found almost anywhere in the Rockies, and many a fairer place than this Bull's Run, which possessed no extraordinary attractions.

Straight to the foremost tavern the Cheltons went after disembarking from the stage, and procured apartments and accommodations for three days, which was to be the limit of their stay.

But little change had occurred in the appearance of the three since last we saw them, except it were that Louise looked a trifle older, and there was a worn expression upon her face. A few more silver hairs threaded Chelton's hair and mustache, and Gueleppo's swarthy skin seemed yearly to grow swarthier.

Later in the day, after their arrival at Bull's Run, Chelton entered his wife's apartment, a strange expression upon his face, as he beheld the little creature—not yet a woman in age—sitting at a window, and gazing wearily out at the bleak aspect of their surroundings. All this travel and sight-seeing had lost its charm with her; she longed to return to dear old Philadelphia.

"Well, my dear, how do you like the look of things in this out-of-the-way place?" was his salutation, as he seated himself and removed a cigar from between his teeth. "I flatter myself it is just the place for my business."

"For your business?" she interrogated, looking up indifferently.

"Exactly, dear—for my business. I have brought you here for a purpose, as you have probably not guessed. You must now do what I requested you to do, some time ago—sign over your property to me!"

"No! never!" she cried, rising to her feet, indignation in her voice and demeanor. "Villain though you are, Arnold Chelton, you shall not triumph in this. Is it not enough that you have spent all of your own available cash, without squandering mine? No, I will never sign over my little fortune into your hands."

"So you told me before, my dove!" the villain said, coolly, "but I would not believe you. I had every confidence that I could fix you with force, if not with persuasion, and so I brought you to this out-of-the-way place, where crime is an indispensable luxury, and the inhabitants as bloodthirsty as the red-skins themselves. So you will see the urgent necessity of coming to terms."

"No—never!"

"You won't? Well, then, while I call Gueleppo in to hold you, it shall be my unpleasant duty to cut your fair throat from ear to ear!"

Louie uttered a cry of horror.

"Oh! surely! surely you would not murder me, Arnold?"

"Sorry; but that is precisely what I shall do, unless you sign the papers which I have here, all in readiness. I had them made out in St. Louis. Gueleppo!"

"Yes, sir," came the response, and the Italian stepped inside the room. "At your service, sir!"

"Good! Did you find a place to get the knife sharpened?"

"No, sir; but I purchased one at a Jew pawnbroker's below here, which is as keen as a razor."

"Very well; that will answer the same purpose. At a Jew pawnbroker's, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"What kind of an individual?"

"A Jew, sir, with a big corporosity."

"Ha! and did you notice or learn what his name is?"

"I just chanced to glance at his sign, sir. Isaac Isaacs is his name!"

"Is it possible? The very man I want to see. He skinned out of Philadelphia, two years and a half ago."

Then Chelton turned upon his young wife, who was sobbing bitterly.

"Come! come! you baby, dry up your bawling. Will you sign the papers, or have your throat cut, in preference? Give me the knife, Gueleppo, and prepare to seize her!"

"No! no; I will never sign them, you demon!" Louie fairly screamed, rising to her feet, and leveling two revolvers upon the astonished villains. "Get out of the room, or, as God is my judge, I will put a bullet through both of your black hearts!"

She stood proudly erect, a steely glitter in her eyes, a compression of her lips denoting resolution. Never a particle did the two weapons quaver; and the two men felt that she would do as she had said.

"Go!" she repeated, her voice ringing out clearly; "go or you are dead men! Do not think that I cannot shoot or am afraid, or you will find out your mistake. I have in secret been preparing for this hour when I should needs defend myself against you two human wolves!"

Astonished beyond measure, Chelton slunk hastily from the room, and was followed by his tool, the Italian. Down in the bar-room below, the two worthies held a consultation over their defeat, which Chelton closed with the following words:

"We cannot do anything more with her at present. She is on guard, and it would be dangerous to trifle with her. I shall first have to coax around her, make apologies, and any amount of promises, and in that way reduce her suspicion and watchfulness. Next time we will use revolvers instead of knives."

Then they parted, although the faithful Italian was always within call, ready to fly to his master's aid in case of need.

Chelton went out from the tavern, and searched for the pawnbroker's. He was not long in finding a little shanty close by, over the door of which hung a sign:

"ISAAC ISAACS, LOAN OFFICE."

"Ah!" the millionaire exclaimed, as he stepped within the front room, which was occupied as a store; "this is the place, as I thought."

Isaac Isaacs—the identical, self-same Isaac, glossy faced and rotund—stood behind the counter, burnishing a brass watch-case into a fair representation of gold.

"Hello, Mr. Isaac Isaacs!" cried Chelton, with a grim laugh. "This is the last place in the world I should expect to find you."

"Eh? you was surprised ter vind der oldt Vander-

ing Jew vay out mit der West, hey? Vell, pizness got so slow in de city, unt I vas so ferry poor, dot I vas forced to pull out. Who vash you, onnyhow? Ish you Dan Jones?"

"Oh, no!"

"Philip Schneider, den?"

"Nor Philip!"

"Ish dot so? Den you must be dot t'ief, Jake Schwartz, vot sdole away mit a tray of my gold hunding-gase watches. Aha! you peesh Shake?"

"Nixy, old man! You don't know me, I guess."

"Oh! don't fool mit yerself. Isaacs vas no such a large fool as you subbose. I twig you, ash de poys used der say. You ish Hyman Schroeder, der bick-bocket, vat left sum sdolen silverware mit my pawnshop, for vich I got six veeks in Moyamensing brison. Yah! dat ish shoost who you pe."

"Ha! ha! old man, you're wrong again. I don't think you know me at all: never knew you—at least, intimately. My name is Arnold Chelton, the millionaire. I succeeded to old Jacob Morgan's estate."

"Ish dot so? You succeeded in peating old Shake Morgan, eh? Vell, dot vas pad. Shake couldn't have held a goot hard, den. You had de most glubs an' drumps, no doubt. Undt your name vas Chelton? Yaw! I remember. Dere pe a Chelton avenue up mit Yermantown; you vas some relation mit dot, probably!"

"Oh! yes, without doubt. But, old man, I have a little business with you, which we can just as well transact now, as any other time. What do you know concerning the will of the late Jacob Morgan, deceased?"

"Hey? how vas dot?"

"What do you know about the will of the late Jacob Morgan, deceased?"

"Ish dot so? Shacob vas ceased drinking, den? Vell, dot ish goot. We used to vas elegant friends, unt took our lemonade straight. But sumdim's Shake he vould get so full as a ped-pug, unt I haff to carry him home in my arms. Yaw, Shake he vas haff a vill of his own, unt he could fight like sum dwo or tray Sitting-Pulls, I dell you."

"Oh! nonsense; you don't understand at all!" exclaimed Chelton, impatiently, with a frown.

"Yaw, I understand, ferry goot. My foundation vas ferry large for a small man like me. I wear sixteen, large!"

"Botheration! I'm not alluding to your beer capacity, nor your feet. I want to know what you know about the last will and testament of old Jacob Morgan?"

"Nodinks—literally nodinks."

"You lie."

"You lie pack again, mit yourself!"

"Look out, you infernal Jew! You'd better not r'ile me."

"Neider vas it so nice as you might dink to agitate a man of my caliber, sar!" replied Isaacs, with a grin, as he held up a knotty pair of fists. "I weigh shust dree hundredt unt sixty-five pounds an' swei ounces!"

Chelton was forced to laugh. He might as well laugh as cry, for he saw that this man thoroughly knew his own business, and was as keen as a razor.

"See here!" he said, leaning upon the counter, "there's no use of being at swords' points, You know something I desire to know. Come over to the tavern with me, and take a smile."

"Oh! no; I could not leaf my shop; some t'ief sneak in and sdole away my vatches, my goldt, unt my diamonds. Den I pe poorer ash pefore."

"Then perhaps you keep a bottle here, eh?"

"Nodinks but lemonade, at fife tollars a schmell!"

"Phew! you Jews have no lacking for cheek, at all. Well, here is an X; dish out some of your swill!" and the schemer laid a ten-dollar bill upon the counter.

Isaacs pocketed it with a smile of thanks, and then set out a bottle and glasses. Chelton poured out a glassful, and raised it to his lips.

"Why, this is no lemonade; it's the best article of brandy!" he exclaimed.

"*Ish dot so?*" drawled the Jew, his little eyes blinking merrily. "Dot ish de kind of a Jewsharp I am!"

They drank twice around, and then Chelton looked straight at the man behind the counter.

"Now," he said, "how much do you know about the will of Jacob Morgan?"

"Nodinks, Mishter Chelton Avenue—nodinks, I assure you," and Isaacs picked one of his gleaming teeth with a huge bowie-knife. "You come to Pull's Run an' t'ink you bulldoze sumt'ings out uff dish Jew pawnproker, but you vas ferry mooch misdaken. Isaacs vas so mooch smarter as you t'ink he vasn't, unt ven you find out anyt'ink apoud vat you don't know from dis Jewsharp, you had petter py sum more lemonade at fife tollars a schmell. Yaw! yaw! yaw!" and the pawnbroker laughed cunningly.

Chelton grew livid with rage, and it is doubtful what he would have said or done had not at this instant a third person entered the room.

He was a young negro, with a face as black as an ace of spades, the whites of his eyes showing ludicrously. He was well formed, commonly dressed, and wore a clownish hat on his head, which was covered with a mass of jetty hair, in the finest, wooliest curls. In his hand he carried a banjo that had evidently seen many hardships.

"Hello! ish dot you, Mister Snow?" exclaimed Isaacs, advancing from behind the counter and setting a chair. "Take a chair unt give us some music. I ish a loafer of goot music, ant you haven't bin aroundt since week pefore next. Mister Snow, dis ish Mister Chelton Avenue, from Philadelphia."

The negro acknowledged the introduction with a grin and a bow, and then proceeded to tune up his aged instrument. While he was thus engaged Arnold Chelton gazed at him as though stupefied.

For in that face, black as it was, *he recognized the features of Sam Morgan!*

Yes, there could be no mistake; they were the same as when he had last seen them two years and a half ago.

Sam Morgan alive!

True enough, like a Phenix, he had risen from his ashes! And with him alive, what did it signify to Arnold Chelton? Sooner or later—*death!*

Well the villain knew this, and as he stood there, with averted face, that the pallor upon it might not be noticed, he resolved that his foe, Phenix or no Phenix, should never leave the town alive.

Mr. Snow strung up his banjo, and then played several artistic solos. Unable to stand the pressure, Isaacs, with all his avoirdupois, stepped out upon the floor and gave some of the best efforts at clog-dancing that Chelton had ever seen. He was as light as a feather when lightness was required, and altogether a most extraordinary dancer. Nor was Mr. Snow to be easily excelled upon the banjo. He produced some very admirable and lively music, and then sung a number of old-time ballads and plantation refrains, in a voice peculiarly sweet in tone—a voice that was not Sam Morgan's: and this caused Chelton to wonder if it were not possible that he was mistaken?—that this was not Morgan?

Surely if Snow's face was artistically blacked, it was a most perfect execution of work.

But there were those gleaming eyes and handsomely-molded features, that betrayed his identity.

He soon finished his vocalism, and arose to depart. Chelton tossed him a coin, and then hurriedly left the pawn-shop. Outside, he found Gueleppo lounging conveniently near.

"Watch the negro—trail him to his lair, but be cautious in your work!" the millionaire said, as he hurried by toward the tavern, never once looking at the Italian. But Gueleppo understood, all the same, and kept his vigil.

He did not put in an appearance at the tavern, until

about midnight, but Chelton was still up and waiting for him, in the bar-room.

"What made you so late?" he demanded, impatiently.

"Oh! I took matters easy, and made sure of my game," the Italian replied, in a chuckling whisper.

"You didn't capture him?"

"Yes, I did—knocked him down, bound him, and carried him out of town, four or five miles from nowhere."

"And killed him?"

"Not much. I left you to do the butchering part. Reckon I'e salted away about enough humans to insure me a safe passage to the devil's regions."

"All right. I'll finish the job," Chelton said, grimly. "Wait here till I go and get my medicine."

"Are you going to use the same stuff you fixed out old Morgan with?"

"Yes—the inhalation, you gave me."

"Better stick him with a knife, along with it, to make sure."

"Ugh! no; I detest bloodshed, where I have to do it personally. The liquid ought to do the work."

"It will, I'll guarantee."

Chelton ran up to his room—one he had engaged separate from that used by his wife, and soon returned, motioning for Gueleppo to lead the way. Accordingly they left the tavern and issued out into the dark, starless night.

Through the intricacies of the uncouth little town they hurried, and out upon the rolling prairie, that fronted to the eastward.

It was some time before the Italian could distinguish his surroundings, but at length he struck into a trail, and hurried on.

In half an hour, by swift walking, they came to where the figure of the negro lay outstretched upon the ground, with his ebony face upturned toward the heaven. He was securely bound, and rendered utterly helpless.

"Ha! ha! Sam Morgan; again we have you!" Chelton exclaimed, kneeling beside the prisoner. "Once before you escaped death, but you shall not now."

"You cannot kill me!" was the reply in a low, strange tone. "You murdered Sam Morgan in a most horrible manner, but his spirit, clothed in the flesh of the Phenix, arose to haunt you and put you 'through to death.' The Phenix is imperishable!"

"Aha! we will see about that. I have a poison for you to inhale, here, which will fix you, I guess. Gueleppo, tie this cloth over his face!"

The Italian firmly fastened the patch of woollen cloth over the negro's face, according to direction. Then Chelton hastily poured the contents of a large vial upon the cloth, after which the two villains turned back toward Bull's Run.

"We shall have to dig out of here on to-morrow's stage, before the body is discovered, or that accursed old Jew may accuse us of the crime. I guess the devil's done away with for sure, this time."

"Undoubtedly. Did you make anything out of the Jew?"

"Nothing. He's game to the backbone."

On the following morning the Chelton party left Bull's Run on the stage.

CHAPTER X.

THE PHENIX ARRIVES.

DEADWOOD!

The wonderful Black Hills city, of strange, exciting history and wild reputation—Deadwood, the theme of conversation when Eastern men meet Western—the first city in size, population and commerce in the Black Hills. Why describe it? It is the same now as when the notorious Deadwood Dick disappeared from his chief field of action for Jim Bludsoe, Jr., to come and take his place with as daring a gang of men as ever Dick had headed.

Some even said Bludsoe was a second Dick, or the old one in disguise, but of course this assertion was

improbable, when Dick was known to be up at Eureka, in Idaho.

One balmy afternoon toward the close of last October, six months after the events last narrated, the Cheltons arrived in Deadwood. They came in on the stage and took quarters at the United States for an indefinite period.

Gueleppo, the Italian, was with them as usual.

At this time Jim Bludsoe, Jr.'s name was upon everybody's tongue in the metropolis; miners and stage-drivers daily brought in complaints; a thorough-going, first-class road-agent the fellow evidently was, and his backers were evidently accomplished scamps. But when that evening's stage from Hayward City was rolling noisily through Black Canyon, six miles out from Deadwood, it was signaled to halt by a clear ringing voice, and out of a transverse defile rode this Bludsoe and his men, in pairs, and surrounded the stage.

A few shots were fired by the passengers within the stage, and one or two of the road-agents dropped out of their saddles. But, when the grim riders closed in on every side, the passengers saw that resistance was useless, and became quiet.

Then the youth, Bludsoe, Jr., dismounted, and flung open the stage door.

"Jim Bludsoe, junior, gents!" he said, coolly, peering within. "All you that have valuables will confer a favor by handing them over without delay. We road-agents cannot wait long, on in-going carriages!"

"Deadwood Dick, again!" whispered one of the miners, but just loud enough to reach the ear of the highwayman.

"No, not Deadwood Dick, gentlemen, but his successor in business, Jim Bludsoe. Come! pan out, or to smash goes this old stage, and its contents, quicker than lightning!"

The passengers grumblingly handed out their valuables, all of which the road-agent coolly stored in his capacious pockets.

When he had received all, evidently, he sprang to the back of his horse, his men swept aside, and the stage was allowed to continue its journey toward Deadwood.

That evening Mrs. Chelton was seated in a parlor of their suite of rooms at the hotel, watching the surging tide of humanity below, in the main street of the town. A curious collection of beings were there, in all manners of dress, and of all nationalities. Chinamen were plentiful, but more than plentiful were the rough, uncouth natives of the West—miners, scouts and trappers.

Mrs. Chelton was all alone. Arnold and Gueleppo had gone out, to visit some gaming den, no doubt, and she had naught to occupy her attention but to watch the crowds below—not until she heard a footstep within her room.

Then she sprang to her feet, and uttered a shriek as she beheld the form of a man standing close by, in the light of the chandelier.

"Sam Morgan!" she cried, growing deathly pale.

"Jim Bludsoe, Jr., at your service!" he replied, coolly.

"Oh! it cannot be! Do you think you can deceive me? You are—"

"Jim Bludsoe!" came again; "the road-agent, and Phenix, which rose from the ashes of Sam Morgan!"

And a striking looking chap was this Bludsoe. Straight and muscular of form, with limbs like bars of iron; a broad, deep chest, an upright, manly carriage; a face which though brown and tanned was handsome; eyes keen and piercing; mouth firm and resolute of expression; and hair brown and worn long upon the shoulders.

His dress was characteristic of more elegance than usually is found in a road-agent. Pants, vest and coat were of some light cloth, and fitted him perfectly. A broad sombrero was tipped back upon his head, jauntily; diamonds gleamed upon his shirt

front and fingers, and a massive double gold chain was strung across his vest front.

Louie uttered another scream at the words of the handsome stranger.

"Oh! do not deceive me?" she pleaded, piteously. "Tell me the truth, and free my mind from this harrowing suspense!"

"Was I not killed in that explosion on the Delaware?" he said, gazing at her thoughtfully. "I don't see how I can be alive and Sam Morgan, after being securely bound, and left a prisoner in the engine-room of the yacht. No, I am not Sam Morgan—that is impossible. I am Jim Bludsoe, Jr., the Boy Phenix."

"I do not understand. You say you were left a prisoner in the yacht."

"And told the truth. That excursion was planned by your beloved husband and his Italian butcher, Gueleppo, especially for my destruction, though I knew it not, until afterward, I was engaged as engineer, but knew not who were to be my passengers. After we struck the bay. I was made a prisoner by Gueleppo, and he fired the yacht."

"And—and—"

"I was first burned into a crisp and my ashes tossed skyward by the explosion!" the road-agent assured, grimly. "Later I came to life as the Phenix!"

"Oh! Sam, how can you tell such terrible falsehoods?" Louie exclaimed. "You can deceive me no longer."

She came swiftly forward—so close to him that her breath fanned his sunburnt cheek.

"What do you want?" he demanded, shrinking away, a pace, as if her presence were contaminating.

"I want you to take me away from Arnold Chelton—protect me, from his brutality—take me, and fly to another part of the earth, where I can live solely in your love."

"Then you *do* love me, yet?" he asked, gazing down at her, curiously.

"Love you! Dear Sam, I have never ceased to love you. I loved you even when I made the one terrible mistake of my life, in marrying Arnold Chelton; I love you still, only with a passion tenfold stronger," she replied, throwing her arms about his neck. But he hastily freed himself from her embrace—put her off at arm's length, and held her there.

"Don't!" he said, gazing at her almost sternly; "remember you can be nothing to me, while you are *his* wife!"

"But he is wild, reckless and dissipated, and if by some act of ruffianism he should meet a merited death?" she questioned—"what then?"

"Don't give me conundrums to answer!" he said, sternly. "My name is Bludsoe, Jr., and I am not now a marrying man. You chose a villain in my place three years ago, and you will have to abide with your lot. You will confer a favor by not mentioning me to your amiable husband, as he might kill me again, which would put me to the trouble of once more rising from my ashes. I bid you a pleasant good-evening, Mrs. Chelton," and then the road-agent turned on his heel and strode from the room, leaving a white-faced, wild-eyed woman staring after him.

Poor Louie! what a terrible mistake her latter life had been! She saw it now—saw how her whole life had been wrecked by her union with Chelton; knew that she hated herself for marrying him, and that she loved this Jim Bludsoe, be he Phenix, Bohemian or road-agent, with all the fervor of her young, passionate nature.

Ah! would or could this love ever be rewarded? No! Bludsoe had as much as said that he would never take her for his wife, out of spite for her refusal, three years ago.

In the mean time Arnold Chelton was spending his evening in gambling at a keno-table in the Me-

metropolitan saloon, in company with a little, white-whiskered old Mennonite gambler, whose name was Harwood. Three times the millionaire had lost largely, and he was cursing his ill-luck roundly, when a new-comer stepped up.

"You have lost some of your former practice, I guess, old fellow!" this new-comer exclaimed, slapping Chelton familiarly upon the shoulder. "The time was, three years ago, when you were the terror of all the faro and keno games in Philadelphia."

Chelton looked around with an oath, as was characteristic of him. The older he grew the more frequent his speech became interlarded with oaths.

"Who are *you*?" he growled, eying the handsomely dressed stranger in surprise. "I don't know you."

"Guess not," assented the other. "Three years covers up old tracks of guilt, and puts new faces on old acquaintances. My name is Jack Jaunders, detective!"

"And a consort of Sam Morgan, also!" Chelton cried, fiercely. "Ha! ha! but I guess I do remember you. You were Dice Rutherford, on the Mississippi."

"Probably. We detectives have to get ourselves disguised sometimes, and associate with the worst of villains, such as you and that Italian dog of yours!"

"Look out, sir, or you will repent your words!" Chelton cried, springing to his feet. "I will tolerate none of your insolence!"

"Oh! you won't, eh? Well, maybe in preference you'd rather tolerate a pair of bracelets!" and Jaunders brought forth a pair of the articles from a pocket in his coat.

The millionaire grew white in an instant, and reeled back.

"Remember!" Jaunders continued, coolly, "that you are wanted for the murder of several persons, in Philadelphia, and I'd just as lieve take you as not. So you had better keep quiet, if you don't want to get your neck stretched."

Then he turned on his heel and strode away.

As soon as he could recover from his excessive agitation, Chelton motioned to Gueleppo, who was lubricating rather freely at the bar. The Italian accordingly came up with his face flushed and breath strongly scented with the stuff the Deadwoodites call whisky.

"You saw that man?" Chelton interrogated, meaning Jaunders.

"Yes, I see'd him."

"Well, he is a detective, and is on our trail. He will attempt to arrest us, soon, if we give him the chance. You must follow, and find where he holds forth, so that we can lay for him. It is as much to your interest as mine, for he knows the truth."

"I'm goin' back to Philly!" Gueleppo growled, sullenly. "We've been dogged ever since we left. In the city a feller has a better show—"

"Of getting nabbed if he steps out of doors. Here in this country a man is safer. Morgan is dead; that leaves only this Jaunders to shake off, and then we shall be without enemies."

Gueleppo turned away, grumblingly, and dogged the footsteps of Jack Jaunders.

The young detective left the Metropolitan, and visited first one and then another of the saloons, until he had made a circuit of the town.

He was evidently in search of some one, but failing to find that person, he finally relinquished his object and turned toward his lodgings.

These were in the Centennial Hotel, which stood close at hand.

Without glancing around, the detective entered the large hallway, and ascended the stairs.

Like a shadow, Gueleppo, the Italian, stole behind him, a long dirk-knife in his grasp.

Murder was evidently his intention. But this was frustrated.

On the first landing, Jaunders suddenly wheeled around, a cocked revolver in his hand.

"You git, you Italian butcher, before I salivate you!" he cried, sternly. "Your chance to murder *me* has not come yet."

"But will come!" Gueleppo growled, turning, and descending the stairs.

He went back and hunted up Chelton, who was still playing with the little Mennonite gambler.

"You were too hasty," was his comment, after he listened to the Italian's recital. "We shall have to tackle him in another shape."

But just what shape they did not conclude upon right away.

CHAPTER XI.

BLUDSOE'S AGENTS AGAIN—AND THE BOOTY THEY GOT.

WHEN Bludsoe, Jr., came, the Deadwoodites began to believe that a curse was resting upon their city, for never since its settlement had it known the words "peace and quietude." Either Indians or road-agents had thus far preyed upon the place almost with impunity.

And now that they had gotten rid of Deadwood Dick, probably as bold and fearless an agent as ever sat in a saddle, and were congratulating themselves upon their good fortune, who should put in an appearance but this youthful highwayman and his men.

Fearless were they and bold, too, and they held the surrounding approaches to the metropolis with a firm hand, although a company of Deadwood's stationed military had made repeated attempts to rout them out. But they held their own, even as Deadwood Dick had done in bygone days, and hardly ever did a stage escape them, or a consignment of gold reach its destination.

On the succeeding afternoon a well-loaded stage was coming through the Two Mile Canyon from the upper mines.

The day was a balmy one in the Black Hills, with a bright blue sky hazed with the touch of Indian summer; a drowsy red sun soaring overhead, and a soft breeze stirring through the walls of the canyon, perfumed with the exquisite odors of a thousand wild flowers, natives of this wonderful flower-paradise of America. Perhaps there is no other place on the continent where flowers of countless varieties grow in such profusion, as if to relieve the picturesque ruggedness that Nature's hand has strewn around liberally.

At the request of the passengers within the large open stage, Jehu had allowed his horses to come to a walk, and the conveyance rolled leisurely through the deep canyon bottom, while those who were within it feasted their eyes upon the wildness and mighty grandeur of the scene.

Among the passengers was an old man, with flowing white beard, and a young lady, pretty as a dream, who from her resemblance to the man, we judge to be his daughter.

Pretty, fair-faced, blue-eyed, and fair-haired, is she—a little human wax doll, with a form as graceful and well-rounded as a *pos-d* statue.

Too dainty a little thing for this wild country, you might say, yet in full health is she, with a strong gladsome eye, and a general agility of movement, denoting vigorous *life*.

Both she and the old gentleman were dressed richly, and evidently occupied higher stations in life than the rough miners who mainly filled the stage. Refinement and culture were to be read in their features and speech.

"Oh! papa! are not those mountain walls grand beyond description?" the maiden cried, enthusiastically. "They remind me of grand paintings I saw in the Art Gallery, at the Centennial, by the old masters."

"Reckon these pictures ar' painted by ther oldest master o' all, my leddy—Goramighty!" observed one of the miners. "Thar ain't one o' them genteel eastern paint-slingers as kin git a true idea o' the mountings, just as they are."

"There is some truth in your assertion, sir," replied the maiden's father, bowing. "I do not think the generality of artists do get the correct idea of mountains and mountain scenery and life, although some creditable approaches are made."

"Yes; ther artist chap neglects ter put in a band o' road-agents, allus, which robs the picture uv ets due romance and poetry."

"Ah! do you have road-agents up here in the Hills, then, as we did in California, years ago?" the old man demanded, with an anxious start, and an apprehensive glance toward his beautiful daughter.

"Reckon we do, capt'in; leastwise, thet's w'at they say—kinder licensed toll-gates, ye see, kept by gentlemen, who'd as leave shute as h'ist 'mountain dew.' Ef ye've got any vallybles, ye'd 'a' better left 'em in Californy, fer I'm doubtful ef they are ever kerryed thru ter Deadwood on this yer old ominous-buss."

"How is this, driver?" the old gentleman demanded, turning to Jehu. "Do you apprehend an attack from road-agents?"

"Shouldn't wonder," replied the man, indifferently. "Bludsoe, Junior, bosses this trail, since Deadwood Dick left, and he generally turns up about stage-time. No use ter get out them revolvers, gov'nor; these ain't the old days o' '49. The 'gents o' the road' come ten to our one, an' ef ye shute, ye're liable to git your skull bu'sted."

"What! then are we to sit still and deliver up our valuables, without even raising a hand in defense?" the old gentleman demanded, in astonishment and horror.

"Guess thet's 'bout the caliber o' ther subject, gov'nor. An', by the way, ye'd better be a gettin' out your contributions, fer yonder aire Bludsoe and his men, now, a-waitin' fer us;" and the driver pointed down the canyon, where some thirty-five or forty men were collected, some of them being drawn in a line across the gulch, while others were lounging about on convenient rocks.

To an eye that had never before seen anything of the kind, this was a striking tableau of mountain life. All the men were a med with polished repeating rifles, and mostly were villainous-looking, be-whiskered chaps—"old stagers" in the dramatic life of the country of gold.

"Yes; them's yer road-agents!" cried one of the passengers, taking out his pocket-book with a sigh. "Paid my toll last week, but I expect I'll hev ter pay et ag'in. No use a-groanin', pilgrims; it's fork over, or stop cold lead."

The stage stopped promptly, when the horses' noses came on a line with the barricade of outlaws. Jehu knew his business—knew his life would pay the forfeit should he attempt to run past.

"Heer we aire, gentlemen—at Bludsoe's toll-gate; no shootin' now, or I'll not be responsible for what happens."

"Your valuables, my friends!" cried a clear, ringing voice, and young Bludsoe, the handsome, dandified successor of Deadwood Dick, stood by the side of the stage. "This is a foreign port into which you have sailed, and you must pay the custom-house duties."

One by one the miners forked over their valuables without a grumble—watches, rings, pins, and a laughable assortment of pocket-books and dust-pouches. As Bludsoe came to Governor Lennox and his beautiful daughter, and as his eyes rested for the first upon the latter, he leaped back with an exclamation.

"Milly Lennox, *you* here!" his face flushing with pleasure and then with shame.

"Sam Morgan, *you* here, and in this position!" Milly cried in astonishment. "*You* a road-agent?"

"So they say, Milly. My name is no longer Sam Morgan. As that boy, I perished in a yacht explosion upon the Delaware river three years ago. I arose from my ashes, like the fabulous Phenix, in the guise of Jim Bludsoe, Junior."

"What means this intimacy of yours with this

outlaw, child?" demanded Governor Lennox, angrily. "Driver, move ahead!"

"Just hold your mules till I say go, Jehu!" ordered Bludsoe, Jr., coolly. "You don't run this stage, old gentleman, *quite* yet. For your impudence I should be justified in demanding your valuables, but on account of your daughter, who used to be a very dear friend of mine, I will allow you to escape unscathed. You may consider yourself lucky. The other plunder, gentlemen, I will dispose of at a good figure, and the moneys proceeds therefrom shall go toward establishing a public school fund at Yankton, Dakota. My outlawry is not for profit so much as for excitement. Miss Lennox, we will meet again. Jehu, you are now at liberty to bowl along once more toward Deadwood."

And Jehu needed no second invitation; he swung his long-lashed whip, gave a screech that made the mountains ring, and away went the stage tearing down the canyon road at a tremendous speed. Neither of the Lennoxes spoke until they reached Deadwood, and found quarters in the "Centennial" hotel; then the old gentleman turned fiercely upon his beautiful daughter.

"Now, Mildred!" he said, sternly, "I wish to know about your acquaintance with this road-agent!"

"I have nothing to tell you father, further than that we were friends, when I lived in Philadelphia with aunt Charlotte. His name was Sam Morgan, then, and he was a very nice boy, who lived in the same tenement we did. I knew he was reported to have been blown up in a yacht explosion, and therefore was very much surprised to meet him out here. Poor Sam! he was very much sinned against, and that is probably what drove him to this wild life."

"Poor Sam, indeed! That sounds nice, now, doesn't it, to come from the lips of a young girl of your standing and age?"

Another stage was stopped by the notorious Bludsoe, Jr., and his men, that day, just as the shades of night were falling over the mountains and gorges.

It was the fastest in the Hills—the one bringing the Cheyenne mail, crowded to its utmost capacity, as usual, and with several individuals on top, among trunks and general baggage.

Chief among these latter passengers, noticeable more for his corpulency and great girth than his beauty, was Isaac Isaacs, the Jew pawnbroker from Bull's Run, with his full stock in the four huge packing trunks on either side of him.

Disgusted was Isaacs with the roughness of the road, and the velocity with which McGucken drove the creaking old stage through the gloomy gorges, where the shadows lurked darkly, before the sun had sunk in its western bed, and loud were the Jew's lamentations, when a great jolt of the conveyance would bounce him up like a rubber ball; and when he came down he made the old roof groan.

"I vish ash vat I had stayed mit Pull's Run!" the pawnbroker ejaculated, after one of his bounces. "I'vas no like all dish shaking up off a veller's insides, undil dey tumble sumersaults mit each odder. I dinks dey'd pedder ash pave de street mit cobblestones an' done wit' it."

"Rather jars ther ponderousness of your preponderance, don't it, old Jewsharp?" questioned McGucken, grimly, as he saw an extra rut in the road, and gave the horses a violent lashing. "Look out now—" and the next moment Isaacs was bounced fully two feet into the air, coming down with a force that made the old top creak.

"Oh! vat for you drive so like all smash, my frient?" groaned the Jew. "Dere pe not so mooch as a pone left in my poddy, ven we get ter Deadwood, I pet you de lemonade. Hello! vat in the tuyfel ish all dose fellers coming down de road, yonder?"

"Whoa!" McGucken roared, setting his horses back upon their haunches; "wake up, pilgrims; road-agents, by thunder!"

"Road tuyfels!" gasped Isaacs, in alarm. "Oh! vat vil become off all my vatches, my shewels, unt

my goldt? Dunderation! vy vor did I not stay mit Pull's Run, v're dey had no road-agents?"

"Yes, why didn't you, you old grunter?" growled McGucken. "Get out yer dudads, fer hayr's Jim Bludsoe an' his gang. No shutin', or you'll huff it ter Deadwood!"

Up came Bludsoe, Jr., and his bold followers, and surrounded the stage. Then out came the unwilling purses to be resigned, and coolly the successor of Deadwood Dick received them, kindly expressing his thanks to each donator.

"Hello, you on the stage there!" saluted Bludsoe; "got any valuables?"

"Not vone valuable, py de stars!" solemnly assured Isaacs, trying to hide himself behind his trunks. "Ve vas ash poor as a church mice!"

"Hello!" again cried Bludsoe. "may I be kicked if it isn't old Isaacs! Hey, old Jewsharp, didn't know you had friends here in Black Hilldom, did ye? Come, tumble yerself off here, you're just the rooster I am anxious to see."

"No, I sthay here mit der stage!" declared Isaacs, defiantly.

"Nary a stay, you old beer-cask!" cried McGucken, and the next minute the unfortunate Jew was pitched head-over-heels down among the road-agents, while the stage rolled noisily away toward Deadwood.

CHAPTER XII.

AND THE PHENIX ROSE—ISAACS'S LITTLE COMPLIMENT—
"FLY! FLY! IT'S YOUR ONLY HOPE."

THAT same evening of Bludsoe's robbery of the Cheyenne stage, Arnold Chelton received a visit from the Phenix while smoking an evening cigar on the balcony of the United States.

He was at the time alone upon the balcony—sat with his feet perched upon the back of another chair enjoying his Havana and gazing down upon the multitudes who thronged the street below.

Nor did he hear a scound of human approach until a low quiet laugh aroused him, and caused him to look around with a start. Then he leaped to his feet with an oath, believing he saw in the ironical Bludsoe a living Sam Morgan.

"You!" he gasped, staggering back with a face as white as snow for the moment—"my God! what mockery is all this?"

Bludsoe motioned him to resume his seat by a wave of his right hand, which held a small cocked derringer, while he proceeded to occupy one just opposite.

"You seem considerably surprised, Chelton?" the Phenix observed, puffing away at his cigar with cool indifference. "One would naturally suppose you had a gripe in the stomach, or—"

"For God's sake, stop!" gasped the villain, hoarsely. "Tell me, are you living—Sam Morgan—or dead?"

"Well, considering the matter from a practical standpoint, I should say that I am not aware of being disembodied, just yet!" the young man replied, with a grim chuckle. "One hardly ever encounters spirits roving about with one hundred and fifty pounds of superfluous flesh about them, to say nothing about other etceteras, and so forth. As to Sam Morgan, you might be able to find a few of his bones yet, in the bottom of Delaware bay, providing the tide has not carried them away. Your present company is James Bludsoe, Jr., the Boy Phenix, as you have probably dreamt."

Chelton remained motionless in his chair, his face still of that ghastly whitish hue; his eyes riveted upon the youth just opposite, in a wild glaring gaze; his forehead clammy with perspiration, and his heart beating sluggishly.

"What do you want?" he again faintly articulated, though it cost him an effort. "Why do you come here?"

"To pass away a few moments of time, while the sheriff and his men are searching for me, in the crowd, yonder!" Bludsoe replied, with a nod toward the street.

"I spied you up here; came up and locked the door behind me, and here we are as nice as a bug in a rug, unless you attempt to vocalize for assistance, when I shall necessarily have to bullet-doze you in the latest Carolina style. Besides, I have a little business to transact with you—wish to relieve your mind, lest you still suspect me to be a supernatural. Lend me a lucifer, please."

Chelton extended his match-case with bad grace, and Bludsoe accepted a couple of matches, with one of which he relit his cigar.

"Was up to call upon Mrs. C. last evening," the road-agent went on, all as coolly as the reputed frigidity of a cucumber, "but she didn't appear to be very happy. Living with a natural-born human wolf, is not what it is cracked up to be. I warned her, however, before she married you."

"She gets treated well enough, considering that she is only my unsuspecting slave!" Chelton replied, with a sardonic grin. "The girl was never legally made my wife!"

Bludsoe betrayed no astonishment or emotion, as the other had very naturally expected, at this declaration.

"I think you are mistaken!" he replied, calmly. "I know it was part of your plot with Charley Heston to have a mock marriage performed; but it so happened that Morgan, the deceased Bohemian, had more power over the student than his cousin, yourself, and as a natural result, he, Heston, was induced to send a real minister of the gospel in his place! and so—"

"You lie!" Chelton cried, fiercely, springing to his feet. "You—"

"Sh!" Bludsoe reminded, raising his derringer. "No need of raising your voice quite so loud; remember that Sheriff Roxly, Jr., is below, and wants a fellow something after my style and disposition. It's the truth and nothing but the truth, that you are legally bound to her who was Lou'e Lester, and I happen to possess duplicate papers to show for it. So, this little information will furnish you food for future meditation. Perhaps you would like to know how I escaped the two traps you so generously laid for me?"

"More than all else!" Chelton assented, with manifest eagerness. "It would enable me to obtain a clearer apprehension of the case."

"Very well. There being no more stages to stop to-night, and having a little extra time, I don't mind telling you."

"In the stern life which we live, we never know when we are to be stricken. I was of course ignorant of peril—ignorant of the hellish trap you had laid for me, until Gueleppo caught me at a disadvantage and made me powerless. Then when I saw him set fire to the yacht, the whole truth flashed across my brain and I knew to whom I owed this threatened death. In vain I struggled to free myself. Not because I was afraid to die did I struggle—I only yearned to get free for the sake of revenge. And I was destined to have my wishes gratified."

"Suddenly a figure leaped from the burning hold, where the flames were raging madly, and my bonds were cut, and I was pitched head-foremost into the bay, through the port-hole where I had been sitting at the time of my capture. The next minute my old chum and Bohemian pard, Jack Jaunders, came after me, and I knew to whom I owed my life. He knew Gueleppo to be a rascal, and scenting crime, he concealed himself aboard—quite luckily for my welfare."

"We swam out into the bay at some distance, and floating upon our backs, allowed the tide to wash us ashore. The next day I arrived in town and had the pleasure of reading my own obituary."

"That affair on the Mississippi was clever enough, but I did not give you a chance to nab me, as you

would have liked no doubt. But at Bull's Run, you again got the best of me. Your villainous Italian again laid me out when I was not expecting him, and then you came to finish the job. That was intended for a poisonous inhalation, what you put upon the cloth and spread over my face, eh?"

"Yes!" Chelton assented, with a wondering nod.

"Well, it was the most grateful poison I ever inhaled. By mistake you had brought along your perfumery bottle, in the place of your poison, and saturated the rag liberally with French cologne. I take the present opportunity to thank you, for in those days I was not able to purchase an article so grateful to the smell!"

"You have been cursed fortunate!" he growled, savagely, "but you cannot always resist death, whether you call yourself devil, Phenix, or what?"

"I do not intend to give you another dig at me!" Bludsoe assured, with a grim smile. "I shall keep watch of you. When I feel in a proper disposition, I shall arrest you and take you back to Philadelphia, and swing you off a scaffold, within Moya's walls, for double murder. Ah! Arnold Chelton, you have fewer secrets from the Phenix than from the old Sam Morgan. I saw you take the life of our uncle; I was the darky who so bothered you. I was also that old fortune-teller, who knew so much about your business; I was within the Lester parlor, in deep disguise, at the time of your marriage; and I was the *sham* M. Sardou, whom you so kindly chucked down the sewer. But for the emptiness of that subterranean passage, I probably should never have escaped!"

"You have been everything but the devil, and a part of him!" was the reply, as Bludsoe arose. "Going?"

"Yes, beloved cousin, though I assure you it causes me much sorrow to part from so angelic a being!" Bludsoe replied. "We shall meet again, I trust:

"So don't crowd on your neighbor, I advise you,
With the thought that you'll triumph ag'in,
For your enemies'll all criticise you,
When I flop up the trump-card and win!"

Saying which the road-agent backed off the balcony, and was gone.

The following forenoon, while sauntering through the main gulch street of Deadwood, which reflects a curious panorama of life, bustle and business, Arnold Chelton came face to face with—Isaacs, the itinerant Jew, whom we had left in the clutches of the road-agents.

Isaacs was whistling that song about "Dot Leedle German Band," and his countenance was as fat, glossy, and beaming as ever.

"Good-morning," Mr. Chelton Avenue!" he exclaimed, putting out his chubby hand. "How you vas?"

"Right well; how are you?" the millionaire replied, shaking hands.

"Oh! Isaacs vas always der same—poor and healthy. I'll take lemonade, if you say so."

"Not at my expense, you won't!" Chelton replied with a chuckle. "I know you of old—a regular old skinflint, you are, with more money than brains."

"Vas? you t'ink old Isaacs vas not got some goot deal prains, eh? You t'ink he vas like an old prass vatch mitoud der verks, eh? Oho! mine vrient, you vas so mucher misdaken as nefer vas. You find dot Isaacs pe a Jew, sure enough, put he peeish no vone's shackass, you pet te sauerkrout on dot! I make you von leedle compliment, Chelton Avenue, v'en I tole you dot you pe a fool!"

"What! you call me a fool!" roared the other, becoming deeply enraged. "You old blunderbuss, take that!" and a heavy cane was raised, and a fierce blow leveled at the Jew. But Isaacs lightly leaped to one side; his chubby fist shot out like a flash of lightning, and struck Chelton between the eyes.

Down went the millionaire in a heap, not insensible, but the possessor of a skinned nose and one blackened eye.

"Yaw! I took dot, unt I giff him pack again, you pet!" laughed Isaacs, good-naturedly. "Ven you vant sum more off der same kind, Mr. Chelton Avenue, shust come around unt see me; you see my sign mit dot building ofer yonder—unt a 'Jewsharp am I!'"

And away sauntered the Jew with the utmost *sang froid*.

It was in the evil, revengeful nature of Chelton to have killed the Jew, but he had another object in view, which would not permit of such a crime. Therefore he got up from the dusty ground, brushed off some of the dirt, and stalked in a very undignified manner toward the door of the United States Hotel, which was but a short distance away, followed by the jeers of a curious crowd which had collected.

He went straight to Louie's room, a very devil gleaming in his eyes. She was reclining upon a bed, but arose quickly as he entered, her face quietly subduing a look of expectancy that had for a moment lingered there.

"See here, you hussy!" the man cried, advancing until he stood directly before her; "do you know what I have just found out?"

"How should I?" she replied, wondering what was coming and trembling in anticipation, for she had grown to fear him, when angered, he was so harsh and cruel—more like some savage wild beast he often conducted himself, than like an intelligent human being.

"How should you, indeed? Why, I have found out that you are legally and lawfully my wife!"

Louie started to her feet.

"Why!" she gasped—"did you ever think me *not* your wife?"

"Yes—of course! I supposed that the man who married us was a sham; but Sam Morgan's accursed interference made a balk, and a true minister was sent—and you are legally bound to me, where I had supposed you to be only my tool and victim."

"Then God praise Sam Morgan!" the young wife cried with spirit.

"Eh! you think you triumph?" he sneered. "Oh! no; you die, curse you—you die, and by my hands, and may my everlasting curse follow you to the place you will go to!"

He sprung upon her like an enraged panther, and clutched her by the throat, forcing her heavily back upon the bed. She tried to scream—to get her breath, but in vain. The wretch's fingers were clutched like a vise around her fair throat, and he threw his whole strength into that gripe.

She grew purple in the face, and when five minutes later he released her she had ceased to breathe: poor Louie was dead.

Dead—her young life blasted and gone in its ripening beauty, and murdered by her husband. He staggered back from his work, with a ghastly face and a shudder of horror.

"This makes three murders!" he said, hoarsely—"two more, and I am free. Free as I was ere I began this criminal life—ah! how long ago it seems! It is better I should be rid of *her*! I now have her property, as I can easily forge her signature—"

At this instant the man Gueleppo burst hastily into the room, his manner betraying great excitement.

"We must fly! fly!" he cried. "It is our only hope. Jack Jaunders, the young detective, is now in this very building, ready to arrest us when we come down-stairs. He has fifty 'regulator guards' with him, and we cannot think of fighting. What ails her?" with a side glance toward the bed.

"Dead!" was the laconic reply.

"Great Heaven! did you murder her too?"

"Yes—just to keep my hand in. But, come; there is not a moment to be lost!"

And neither was there!

CHAPTER XIII.

BLUDSOE AND MILLY—AND A PURSUIT OF VILLAINS.

BLUDSOE, after leaving Chelton, passed down through the hotel, taking care to pull his hat over his eyes, lest he be recognized, and from the hotel out into the street.

"I must disguise myself," he muttered, "for it will not be safe to stalk around as I am. I'll go and get a heavy mustache of old Isaacs, and a Mexican cloak, and then go and visit Miss Lennox."

Straight toward the pawnbroker's he pushed his way, and soon came face to face with Jack Jaunders.

"Have you made any definite time for the caging of our game?" the young detective demanded.

"No; but I've been calling on Chelton, which was all I wished to do before his arrest."

"Then had I not better procure proper aid, and nab him, ere he slides off without our knowledge?"

"Go ahead and seize them. I need not necessarily be brought into the examination here."

"No—you will be wanted when we get back to the States."

Then the two parted, going in separate directions.

Bludsoe repaired to the pawnbroker's, effectually disguise himself, and then hurried to the Centennial Hotel for an interview with pretty Milly Lennox.

Lucky enough was he to encounter her in the hallway, looking as bright and charming as one's imagination can picture. She started when she saw a stalwart, black-mustached, brigandish-looking fellow standing before her, but Sam Morgan's old pleasant laugh reassured her, and she rushed into his open arms.

"Sam! Sam! Is it really you?" she cried, in raptures of joy. "I did not know you at first, in that false mustache and great cloak."

"Yes, Milly, dear, it is Sam, for all three years have passed since we last parted. I have had some doubts lest you would not care to see me after knowing my present profession."

"Oh! Sam, in the three long years that have passed I have looked forward to the moment as the happiest in my life when I should meet you again."

"And is it a happy moment, dearest?" and the young road-agent clasped her closer, while he kissed her ripe, sweet lips. "Can you and do you love me, road-agent though I am?"

"I love you with all my heart!"

"Ah! then I have won my prize by waiting, eh? I am to be rewarded in your sweet little self, for my patience?"

"If you can get papa's consent. But I am afraid he will be very unwilling after finding you are a road-agent."

"Your papa be hanged!" Bludsoe exclaimed. "Where is he? I want to interview him. Come! along we go!"

And straight into the Lennox suite of rooms marched the Phenix, with poor Milly, white with terror, tugging at his coat-tails. The first room entered chanced to be a parlor, and here old Governor Lennox was seated, by a window overlooking the gulch, with his heels elevated, a cigar in his mouth, and his eyes scanning the contents of the latest *Pioneer*.

"Hello!" saluted Bludsoe, Jr., from the center of the room, "here I am, as you see. Bludsoe, Junior, Phenix and road-agent!"

Straight to his feet sprung the so-called "Governor."

"Heavens! what does this mean? Mildred, child, explain the presence of this young ruffian!" he gasped, in holy horror. "Sir-r-r! leave the room instantly or I will give the alarm!"

"Do it at your peril, sir!" was the cool threat.

"What do you want here?" the old man demanded sternly.

"I will tell you," the Phenix replied. "Three years ago, before I was driven into bankruptcy on account of the stringency of my monetary affairs, I

met this maiden in Philadelphia. We resided on Alaska street, a very dignified thoroughfare, and in Mother Maginn's tenement-house, where I occupied the first floor—below the roof. Here our acquaintance and love germinated, and the seasons since then having been rather retrogressive, it is only now that the germs of the past have become ripened, and suitable for harvest. Therefore, we do come unto you, and ask that you, as a lawful citizen and promoter of good, do give your consent that we padlock ourselves together, and express ourselves Eastward ho!"

The "Governor" stood listening, in a half belligerent attitude, and when Bludsoe finished, he brought his fist down upon the table with a vim that made things tremble.

"No!" he roared. "No! my daughter shall never marry a road-thief, while I live. I've roughed it in California, and seen my fill of these road-riders. I marvel at your audacity, sir. Leave the room, or I'll—"

"When I get ready; so don't run off your groove yet. Milly, dear, it is evident that your parent has been drinking, or is slightly affected with the jim-jams. I will call again—soon perhaps, and maybe not for five years. So do not despair, but keep up your courage!"

He caught her in his arms and kissed her; then turned to her father, who was working himself up into a towering rage.

"Adieu!" said Bludsoe, with a bow. "You don't appear to be favorably inclined toward my suit now, but time may change things. Your daughter the Fates have destined shall be my wife, sooner or later."

"Never, sir!"

"Oh! don't you deceive yourself. Good-by, my darling!"—then the young Phenix had taken his departure.

That was a momentous question of "what shall we do?" to the two villains, as they stood face to face in the death-chamber, where one victim lay as silent and cold as marble.

Below were the detectives, blockading the stairway, and what other avenue of escape was there?

"No, not a moment is to be lost," said Gueleppo. "Come! let's quit and lock up this room, and go up into the attic. Perhaps we may find a trap out upon the roof, by which we can escape, and by skipping from roof to roof, we can evade the detectives' vigilance, when you must charter a conveyance to hurry us to the nearest railroad station."

They left the dead woman lying upon the bed—left the room, and secured the door behind them.

Then Gueleppo searched around until he found a stairway leading to the attic, into which the two villains ascended.

It was a dark, unfinished hole under the roof, with a trap opening out, skyward. This Gueleppo pushed aside, and in another moment they were out upon the roof, which was flat, and higher by several feet than its immediate neighbors.

A row of buildings ran in either direction so that it was an easy matter to escape from roof to roof, if no one took notice of them.

Gueleppo replaced the trap, and dislodging a dozen stones from the chimney-top piled them upon it.

"Now, come along, and look out that you don't slip and break your neck!" he said, sliding down to the next roof, which had been made slippery by a recent shower.

It proved a precarious undertaking, this leaping from roof to roof, as in some instances the eaves were four feet apart, and it was full an hour after they left the hotel top, that they landed safely upon *terra firma*.

Fortunately for them, a livery stable was near, and to this they went in hot haste.

"I want to be conveyed to Cheyenne in the fastest possible time!" Chelton said, addressing the stable boss.

"I'll give you five hundred dollars hire for your fastest rig and driver!"

"Phew! guess business must be rather pressin', eh?" the "boss" demanded, inquisitively.

"No matter. Business is business, you know. Will you take the offer?"

"Reckon so. When do you want start?"

"Instantly—there is not a moment to be lost."

"All right. Pan out your duracks, and climb inter yonder cab, an' ye'll be goin' inside o' five minutes, bound fer election!"

Without a word, Chelton counted out the requisite amount from a roll of bills; then he and his villainous consort sprung into an old stage, built in the style of our city hacks, with glass windows in the doors.

Ten minutes later that same cab was flying down through Deadwood gulch at a tremendous pace, drawn by a plunging snorting quartette of fractious horses, over whose heads the veteran Jehu kept the long lash crashing incessantly. And on either door of the cab were tacked hugely lettered banners:

"THROUGH TO CHEYENNE, 307 MILES, IN 100 HOURS.
BEAT IT IF YOU CAN!"

At this same moment Jack Jaunders and Jim Bludsoe, Jr., were viewing the body of the murdered Louise Chelton, as she lay upon the bed in the room where she had been left by Chelton, and where the detective had discovered her.

"She has been choked to death," Bludsoe said, wiping the moisture from his eyes. "Poor girl! Had she but chosen me instead of him! But we must not tarry here, Jack. The demons have escaped by some unknown avenue, and may even now be fleeing from town. I will go in pursuit; you remain here and see that poor Louise has a respectable burial. If you want funds, go to Isaacs. For some unaccountable reason, the Jew has opened his coffers to our use."

"Will you take your men along?"

"As far as Cheyenne, and then send them back. Have this body interred as soon as possible, and then follow by stage. If the two wretches have fled, it is toward Cheyenne, as that is the safest, even though the longest route."

Then, after touching his lips to the cold, white forehead of the murdered girl-wife, Bludsoe turned from the room, tears in his eyes.

He still wore his Mexican disguise, and had little fear of being recognized. He descended into the street and made his way immediately to the nearest livery stable which chanced to be the one where the fugitives had procured their conveyance.

"Did two men just get a rig here for Cheyenne?" Bludsoe demanded, taking a roll of bills from his pocket, temptingly, as he stood before the stable-boss.

"You bet!" was the reply; "paid five hundred dollars, and Joe Finch is goin' ter put 'em clean thr'u' in a hundred hours, an' take time fer changes, at Camp Crook, Red Canyon, and Raw-Hide, or bu'st the b'iler!"

"All right; wish I'd been here, before he went; here's a note for your information!" and handing out a bill, Bludsoe hurried away.

Straight to Isaacs's shop he went, and found the Jew behind the counter, as usual.

"The game has fled!" Bludsoe announced, "and I want more money to follow. After Chelton gets his neck stretched, you shall have your pay."

"Dat ish all right, unt I shut up mine shop unt come after you, pime-py!" the pawnbroker replied, laying a pile of greenbacks on the counter.

Bludsoe counted out enough for his immediate needs, and shoved the rest back.

"What is the secret of your liberality to me?" he questioned.

"Shust you nefer vas apoud dose!" Isaacs replied, opening and shutting one eye in a significant way.

"You not find oud apoud dose t'ings until you git

oldt mit dwenty-one years. So go unt chase after dot Chelton Avenue!"

An hour later Jim Bludsoe, Jr., at the head of thirty mounted and "heeled" road-agents, dashed furiously down through Deadwood, bound in pursuit of his two mortal enemies, and he waved his hat in farewell parting to Milly Lennox, who stood on the steps of the Centennial Hotel, as he dashed past. A few shots were fired at the dare-devil cavalcade, but none took effect.

The fugitives had a good two hours the start, and they kept it. When Bludsoe arrived at the junction where the French creek route to Cheyenne branches out from the Red Canyon route, that junction being at sleepy little Custer City, he learned that the flying stage had passed by five hours before, and had taken the Red Canyon route, in preference to the shorter one by French creek.

Making a quick exchange of horses, the Phenix and his men took the short route, and pressed on at a break-neck speed, hoping against hope to reach Cheyenne in advance of Chelton and his villainous partner in crime.

Remembering the time-tables, the youth knew that an Eastern-bound train would leave Cheyenne, a hundred hours after their departure from Deadwood.

As often as possible they effected a change of horses, and kept on hoping against hope that some accident would delay the fugitives.

But frantic though were their endeavors, when they had been ninety-nine hours out from Deadwood, they had twelve long miles to accomplish.

Madly were the poor animals lashed and spurred, but when they arrived in Cheyenne, at the depot, the train had been gone just ten minutes; and seeing the Deadwood driver, Bludsoe and his men learned that their prey had gone.

Bidding his men good-by, the young Phenix dispatched them back to the Hills, and then prepared himself to wait for the next train, which would not depart for two days.

CHAPTER XIV.

DODGING ABOUT—RIVER PIRACY.

In his Walnut street mansion, in Philadelphia, Arnold Chelton sat, with a clouded brow, and a savage glitter in his eye. The man was changed—his brow was growing deeply furrowed, more silver was gradually threading his hair, and his dress was neglected, and growing rough and shabby.

He was restless, and his eyes glared around wildly, lest they should behold some accusing phantom—or that phantom of his existence, the Phenix.

"For he will come!" the villain muttered, hoarsely; "he will not fail to hound me through to death, as he has threatened. But, I will fight him to the last. The devil's bound to get me, and what matter if I commit a few more sins?"

"No matter!" replied a voice, and looking around, the millionaire beheld Gueleppo, the Italian, standing in the room.

"I thought you had sailed for Europe," Chelton growled.

"Yes, no doubt of it; but I changed my mind. Don't be sassy, for you'll need me, yet, for I came to inform you that the enemy had arrived."

"What! so soon?" the murderer gasped, starting to his feet.

"Yes; came in yesterday. Must've took the next train after ours."

"Who?"

"The Boy Phenix and Jaunders!"

The millionaire covered his face with his hands and groaned.

"My God, it seems as if those two were leagued with the devil against me. Surely the devil ought not to turn on me, after all the service I have done him."

"His majesty is no respecter of persons, you

know. He'd as soon tickle his best friend with his horn as not."

"Where did you see these sleuths?"

"On Chestnut street, conversing with a policeman. And as it looked suspicious, I thought it behooved me to come and take care of you. I have brought ample disguises!" and here the villain took a bundle of clothing from under his arm. "Our only chance, now, is to hide our identity, and roam about the city, watching for a chance to escape to another city."

"I wish we had stayed in the West!" Chelton said, grimly.

"So do I; but it's wish in one hand and want in the other. We're safely caged in Philadelphia, for a time at least."

"Why? do you think all the immediate approaches are guarded?"

"Yes; no doubt the police, railway conductors, and detectives are all notified to look out for us. It is not easy for a man of my type to change his appearance, sufficient to deceive metropolitan eyes! However, we can do no better than to try."

So the two villains set to work, at once, for there was no time to be lost. At any moment the Phenix might pounce upon them, with a posse of police, and hurry them to the station-house.

First, Chelton shaved off his mustache, and donned a full sweeping beard to match his hair, while Gueleppo left his face shorn of its beard and perfectly smooth.

They then changed their clothing, and donned slouch hats and calico shirts, and they were "rigged" for the danger. Despite his downcast spirits, Chelton had to laugh, as he viewed himself in a mirror.

"Who'd ever supposed Arnold Chelton would sport such an aristocratic regalia as this?" he laughed in hearty disgust. "Mick-a-Macs ar' we, begorra, from Galway!"

"Hod-carriers and common laborers, for sure!" replied Gueleppo. "Come! the sooner we get out of here the better for our peace of mind."

Accordingly they left the mansion, locking the door behind them, as Chelton had not re-engaged any servants, on his hasty return from the Black Hills.

The Italian then led the way, and they sauntered down Chestnut street to Fox's theater, where Sid France was playing. Here they went in and spent a couple of hours at the matinee, after which they came out and adjourned to a cheap beer-garden, to avoid creating suspicion, where they partook of sandwich, switzer cheese, and lager to their fill.

While they were sitting in the garden, their attention was attracted to an old man, apparently growing blind, with white hair, and bent form, who entered, and groped his way along to a convenient bench not far from where they were seated.

"Hello, old man; what'll you have?" Gueleppo demanded, in as jolly and social tone as he could command. "You seem to be getting pretty well on toward the grave."

"Yes—yes!" the old man replied, in a faint, wheezy tone. "I ain't so young as I use to was. *Ein* beer, waiter."

Gueleppo touched Chelton upon the arm.

"Come!" he said, and the significance in his voice caused the other to follow him without a word. But when they were upon the street, the millionaire looked inquiringly into his tool's face.

"What was it?" he inquired anxiously.

"You saw that old man, eh?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"Well, your eyes ain't very sharp. That's no old man at all!"

"What?"

"No old man at all."

"The deuce you say."

"Only an ace there—but that ace is liable to turn up trump!"

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. That fellow was younger than either you or I. *It was the Phenix!*"

"Great God, is that true? Then he recognized us."

"No, I do not think so. He had hardly time to look us over. I spotted him by his voice and by the fact that I could see where the beard and wig met. If he discovered our identity, we shall soon know it, for he will be sure to follow us, in that case. Come!"

The saloon and garden was near Twenty-fourth and Callowhill streets, and being handy to the entrance of Fairmount Park, in under the Spring Garden street bridge, the two men wended their way thitherward, passing through the water-works, and over the promenade to the classic shades of the grand old park on Lemon Hill.

The hour was just at the approach of evening; the sun was setting gloriously in the western sea of forest that comprises Fairmount's 2,996 acres, and throwing a grand flood of light upon the placid bosom of the beautiful Schuylkill, with its handsome boat-houses and puffing steamers; on Lemon Hill thousands of people were strolling, lounging, riding, or amusing themselves at croquet upon the great evenly mown lawns, over which forest monarchs cast their shadows, and a well-organized band discoursing such music as was appropriate to lull and yet charm the senses, and praise God for the beauty and fascination of the hour.

Chelton and Gueleppo made their way along near to the band stand and found an empty seat, which they took and lit fresh cigars.

There were many passing by where he sat, whom the millionaire had three years ago classed among his friends—a very few honest disposed citizens and a great preponderance of rogues and rascals.

But he dare not speak and betray himself; he was a hunted outcast upon the face of the earth.

While they were lounging in the park, the millionaire purchased a copy of the *Leader* of a wandering newsboy, and idly glanced over its advertising columns.

In a few moments his face assumed an ashen hue, and a bitter curse escaped his lips.

"See!" he exclaimed, directing the Italian's attention to a paragraph in the "Personals" column—"The Phenix has arrived—and will push matters Through to Death!"

"Ha! the young devil meant it should reach you!" the Italian assented. "He means to push it through to death, in earnest. We must lay another trap for him; but in what shap? Come! let's walk toward town, while I agitate the question!"

The old man whom Chelton and his "right-bower" had encountered in the beer-garden was indeed Bludsoe, Jr., so cleverly disguised that not one out of ten thousand would have suspected his identity.

But he had failed to recognize his enemies, in this instance, taking them to be a couple of common laborers, at one of the neighboring factories. And therefore he had been less guarded than usual with him, when in disguise.

Shortly after their departure, he also left the garden, and sauntered along down Callowhill street to Tenth, where Ridge avenue intersects—the location of the New National Theater.

He found Jack Jaunders lounging here, with rather a dubious expression of countenance.

"What luck?" Bludsoe demanded, as he came up.

"No luck!" Jaunders replied. "The game is roaming in the city, yet, but so well disguised that it is useless for us to search."

"Oh! no," the Phenix said, cheerfully, "not useless. I shall let nothing be useless till I hunt those two men down, and deliver them to justice and death!"

About nine o'clock they were at South street wharf, when two men came hastily down the pier, and hired a boat of the old man who has skiffs to rent at this place.

Springing in, the two men pulled out into the Delaware.

"Chelton and Gueleppo!" whispered Jack Jaunders, quickly.

"I saw those two men in a beer-garden to-day," replied Bludsoe; "and I don't believe they're our game."

"I do, and am going to follow them, you hear me!"

Jaunders tossed the old man the renting price of a boat, and, leaping into a trim little skiff, seized the oars.

"Hold on, I'll go along if there is any promise of an adventure," Bludsoe said, stepping into the craft. "Now, go ahead with your ark."

Jaunders pulled quickly out upon the restless bosom of the Delaware, in the direction the two men had taken.

The night was inky black, and a misty fog enveloped the river. Overhead, the clouds were gathered in great banks and the sullen rumble along the heavens predicted a thunder-storm. Fifty yards from shore, and the lights of the city had faded from view, in the dense fog.

"You won't find your game, after all!" Bludsoe declared, leaning back in the stern of the skiff, and lighting a cigar. But Jaunders quickly knocked it from his mouth into the river.

"No smoking in this boat!" he said, in a low tone. "These devils may be only a few yards distant, and the glowing end of your cigar would make a capital target for a revolver-shot. Keep quiet now, and we'll listen a bit."

Saying which, the young detective raised the oars in the row-locks, and they both listened carefully. But no sound was audible, except the lapping of the waves against the sides of their skiff. A strange silence was brooding over land and water, preceding the outburst of the coming storm; there was scarcely a breath of air stirring, even upon the water; an occasional faint twinge of lightning shot zig-zag athwart the black sky.

"There, I told you that they were not our game; and you've come on a fool's errand!" laughed Jim Bludsoe, Jr., coolly.

"Keep quiet. Nothing has gone to prove to the contrary of what I said!" replied Jaunders, pulling carefully on over the river.

"In my opinion those two men, who were none other than Chelton and his bulldog in disguise, saw us standing upon the wharf, and thinking to decoy us out upon the river, or to test us and see if we suspicioned them, did as we have seen."

"Maybe you're right," Bludsoe replied, thoughtfully; "but in case you are, what's the use of our paddling about here on a wild-goose chase, and stand a chance of getting salivated, as they say out in the Black Hills?"

"Because we must not let them escape our surveillance this time, or we may not be so fortunate in penetrating their disguise another. When you have a point, always play it and trust to luck."

So the young detective pulled on perseveringly. It was perseverance and indomitable pluck that had been the means of getting him in favor with the detective-police and securing him a situation upon the force, where he was now recognized as a valuable member.

Steadily on pulled he, with strong but cautious strokes, his eyes peering ahead into the fog as sharply as the night-seeing orbs of the owl. And Bludsoe, Jr., was now upon the alert also.

He kept his eyes roving on either side and behind, and a couple of revolvers, which had done road-agent service in the Black Hills, he held in readiness for emergency.

"Sh!" he suddenly whispered: "listen—quick!"

Jack ceased rowing, and both listened intently. From over the waters, ahead of them, came the sounds of angry voices and angry words:

"Put down that revolver, you old lunatic, or I'll—"

"You pe shoost easy!" came back, in strong German accent; "shoost so much as raish *ein* finger, unt I make bologna sausage out off you. You foller me, unt t'inks I ish von shackass unt a cowedard, put, py Shiminny gracious, I dinks I got more revolver ash you haff!"

"Thunderation!" Jaunders ejaculated; "I cannot be mistaken, surely. That is the voice of old Isaacs, the Jew, whom we left in Deadwood."

"That's who it is!" Bludsoe, Jr., replied, with enthusiasm. "Pull ahead, and we'll take a little hand in this game."

And Jaunders did pull, with a will.

CHAPTER XV.

THAT LITTLE DEMIJOHN OF BRANDY.

JAUNDERS, being an expert oarsman, sent the skiff gliding over the water, with great rapidity. Bludsoe sat in the prow, with his revolvers ready for instant use, for well was he aware of the nature of these two men, ahead of him.

Soon the skiff glided into a space in the fog, where two other boats were rocking, one of which contained the two disguised partners-in-crime, Gueleppo and Chelton, while in the other sat the old German-Jew pawnbroker, Isaac Isaacs. There was a broad grin upon his fat, shining countenance, and in his clutch he held two formidable cavalry pistols, which were leveled at the men in the other boat. They also each held a revolver, aimed at Isaacs, so that the situation was pretty well evened.

"You t'ink I vas a pig cowedard?" roared Isaacs in high dudgeon. "Vy, py Solomon, I scoop ther hull top off your head off, vor swi lager. You peeish a couble o' swine, you pe, vat squeal ven your swill ish gone. Aha! von't I manufacgure limburger cheese out off you, dough? Don't you vish you no follow der Jewsharp?"

"Helle!" here interposed Bludsoe, Jr., as his boat glided alongside; "what kind of a Dutch pick-a-nick d'ye call this? Ha! Isaacs, is that you?"

"Yaw! yaw! dish pe der Russian army, unt dose pe der turkey-gobblers," grinned the Jew, with a chuckle. "I coome out in mine poat ter go ofer mit Camden, unt dose loafers do coome after me, unt dey t'ink ash how dey murder me, unt dey find der old Sweitzer-case wasn't so moocher asleep, as dey subbosod."

"Ha! ha! good enough. I suppose you know who the worthy pair are, don't you?"

"Yaw! I twig 'em, ash der poys say. Dat is Chelton Avenue, unt dose oder shap he pe Chelton Avenue's pull-dog."

"Correct are you, and, gentlemen, it becomes our duty to arrest you, for willful murder!" Bludsoe cried, covering the two with his revolvers. "Jaunders, will you be kind enough to step over into their boat, and clap the handcuffs on their wrists?"

"Curse you!" growled Chelton, trying to turn his aim upon the young Phenix; but Isaacs warned him of the danger of such an action, by full-cocking one of his pistols, and shoving it forward, with one of his strange chuckles.

"No you don't vas, Chelton Avenue!" he said grimly, "not vile der old Jewsharp knows his sauerkraut!"

"May's well become quietus, Cap!" the Italian declared, seeing how the case stood. "Ther jig's up!"

"Yes, the jig's up, and the scaffold soon *will* be, for your reception!" announced Bludsoe, coolly. "So you had better give up peaceably, as we've got more lead-and-powder ballast than you have!"

Jaunders shipped the oars, drew a couple of pairs of handcuffs from his pocket, and stepped toward the other boat—not into it, for the Italian gave it a violent shove away, and down into the river the young detective went.

But he clutched quickly at the side of the enemy's boat, and succeeded in getting a hold, but so great was the velocity of his fall, that he pulled the frail craft over and completely capsized it.

Bad was this, for neither Bludsoe, Jr., nor the Jew could get a shot at the villains, ere they disappeared from view in the river.

And the blackness of the night made it impossible to sight them when they came up to the surface, if they did come up, which was not very probable.

Most likely they swam in under water until at a safe distance, and then made for the shore. Anyhow, the three friends saw nothing more of them that night.

Jaunders came to the surface, and was pulled into the boat, after which Bludsoe discovered that old Isaacs was pulling sturdily away toward the Jersey shore.

He did not hail him, but took the oars, and pulled with all his might and main for Pine street wharf.

Jaunders was rather "down in the mouth" over the results of his blundering misstep, and said little or nothing during the passage to shore.

As soon as they reached the pier, Bludsoe sprung out, and signaled to a policeman.

"If you see two wet men come out of the river," he said, "arrest them, for they are murderers."

Then, without further explanation, he hurried away to give the alarm to other guards beyond the water line.

But his labors were in vain, for no men were seen, nor arrests made; and it looked probable that the two villains had swum a long ways above, before landing, in order to avoid arrest.

Three days passed, and the Phenix and Jack Jaunders were on the alert, but failed to discover any clew of their game.

The two had taken up their quarters in Mother Maginn's tenement on Alaska street, occupying the same room Sam Morgan had occupied previous to the yacht explosion, three years before.

Here they were lounging one day, smoking their pipes and listening to the wild rain outside, which was warm but still autumnal. A late autumn, too, for it was November, with nights and days not unlike August.

"Did you see anything of my new flame before you came from Deadwood?" Bludsoe asked, his thoughts going back to Milly Lennox, and to the fact that she was very dear to him.

"Yes; her father and herself were pullin' for Hayward City when I left, and tuk their baggage. Guess the old gent calculated it wasn't safe to stay in Deadwood with the gal while you were around."

"Perhaps so. But I'll have her yet, or bu'st something, after I get through here."

"Then you will go back, eh?"

"Yes; I like it ten per cent. better in the West than here. There is a wild, strange romance about life there that we do not have here in the city."

"Too much, sometimes, when you get scalped by the Indians or knocked over by a bloody road-agent—like Bludsoe, Jr., for instance."

"Pshaw! road-agents ain't such a bad set of fellows; only the people fail to properly appreciate them, I reckon."

At this instant there was a knock at the door of their room.

Jaunders rose with a lazy yawn and opened the door, to find a boy standing outside, with a small-sized demijohn in his hand.

"Well, sonny, what is it?" the detective demanded in some curiosity. "What do you want?"

"Does Mr. Jim Bludsoe live here?" the boy asked.

"Reckon he does. Why?"

"Then here's a flask of brandy for him, sir," and the boy deposited the demijohn upon the floor.

"Brandy! Hey, Jim, here's a present for you—half a gallon of Hungarian brandy!" shouted Jack.

The Boy Phenix came forward, and gazed at the demijohn in surprise.

"What does this mean? Who gave you this, boy?"

"Isaac Isaacs, sir!"

"Eh? the old Jew?"

"Yes, sir, w'at used to keep the pawn-shop down South street."

"Humph! wonder what ever possessed the old rogue to send this here? Who'd he say it was to, boy?"

"To Mr. Jim Bludsoe."

"Well, then, I'll keep it. Hungarian brandy; that's the prime stuff, I'll bet. These German Jews generally drink it, I remember. Hey, boy, hold up;" for the lad was about to depart. "What sort of a man was this Isaacs?"

"A fat man, sir, with shiny face, and a big corporeity."

"Isaacs it was, then. Guess it's all right, so you can go."

The boy tramped away, and Bludsoe and Jack returned to their room.

"An odd old quill is that Isaacs," the Phenix commented, setting the demijohn upon the stand. "Somehow, I can't understand his liberality toward me of late. He is in possession of some secret, concerning me, but I'm blowed if I can guess its nature."

"Oh! he's an old rooster," Jaunders assured, grimly. "Find a Jew, will you, that is liberal, when it's out of his own pocket? Did he and your uncle have any acquaintance?"

"Conundrum. Guess not; at least I never knew anything about it."

"Didn't know Hungarian brandy was liable to evaporate into the cork, if I left standing long in a close room, neither, did you?"

"Oh! I see what you are after. You want to get your lips glued onto the mouth of that Jonathan, don't you, old covey?"

"Well, I confess that I have a desire to sample the stuff. My torpid liver demands a certain amount of spiritual comfort, or I should not live-r day out."

"Oh! too thin; but, since old Isaacs has been so generous in his donation, I don't suppose it would do any harm to take a swallow, though I am no advocate of strong drink."

Accordingly the demijohn was uncorked, and a couple of glasses of the liquor poured out. It was clear, pure and fragrant, and showed that the Jews have a good choice in the selection of what they drink. Rarely do they use the poisonous decoctions which so many of the Americans imbibe.

Bludsoe raised his glass to his lips; then suddenly set it back upon the table, again.

"Don't!" he said, to Jaunders, who was about to taste of his; "put it down!"

"Why?" demanded the detective, in surprise. "What's up?"

"Nothing much, maybe, only don't taste of that brandy. I believe, by my soul, it is *poisoned*!"

"Poisoned?" Jaunders let the glass drop out of his fingers to the floor. "What makes you imagine that?"

"I cannot tell you. Some horrible glimpse of the death contained in that liquor, flashed before my eyes, as I had the glass raised to my lips!" the Phenix replied, with a slight shudder.

"And you believe it's poisoned?"

"I do, sincerely."

"But what motive could Isaacs possibly have? I cannot understand."

"If the liquor is poisoned, *Isaacs* never sent it. The Jew is our friend, instead of our enemy."

"Shust pet your sauer-kROUT on dose!" cried a hearty voice, and into the room walked the old pawnbroker, as big as life, and twice as natural.

"How you vas, poys? Didn't expect a tune from olt Jewsharp, apoud dish time, eh? No, I guess nixy. Dunder, vat ish der matter?"

"Very much obliged to you for sending us this brandy, Isaacs!" said Bludsoe, grimly. "Rather you'd left out the poison, though!"

"Eh? vas? vat you say?" queried the Jew, in evident astonishment. "Vat sdyle off a game you givin' me?"

Bludsoe explained in a few words what is already known to the readers.

"Unt you d'ink ash vat I sent der prandy, den?" he said thoughtfully. "Vell, you make as pig a mistake as Jake Schneider did, ven he for der first time eat some limburger cheese, d'inking ash it vas sponge cake. Oh! no; Isaacs no send dot prandy, pet yer sweitzer case on dose!"

"Then it came from Arnold Chelton!" Bludsoe decided, a terrible glitter in his eyes. "He has played the last card in his hand—and lost! Now then, we will push this thing through without delay. I think we can trace the tiger to his lair."

"It first remains, however, to prove this brandy poisoned. There is a chemist around the block. I will take a little of the brandy to him, in a glass, and let him analyze it. That will settle it."

And accordingly he did so, taking about a table-spoonful of the liquor, and departing, informing Isaacs and Jack to await his return.

The chemist received the liquor, with an inquiring glance.

"I want you to examine that and see if it contains poison," Bludsoe said. "And be quick about it, too."

The chemist disappeared behind the partition, and five minutes later came forth.

"I cannot make a perfect analysis immediately, so that you will know the nature of the poison, as it is a foreign compound we do not often find. But, it's enough to say, at present, that one swallow of that brandy would produce almost instant death."

"Very well; that is all I wish to know at present," and paying the fee, the Phenix returned to his room in the tenement.

"It was as I suspected," he said, "and Chelton's villainy has failed for the third time. A swallow of that stuff will kill a man."

Seizing the demijohn he dashed it into bits upon the floor, the liquor spreading out like rivers through the dust.

"Now come, both of you, and we will hunt up the boy that brought it, and he can no doubt tell us where to find the game. I think the lad hangs out in Callowhill, or some court near, at Twenty-second street."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE JEW'S SECRET—CONCLUSION.

AFTER some further arrangements the trio left Bludsoe's old tenement quarters, and took the cars north to Callowhill street, and then west to the Spring Garden street bridge, on the eastern side of which is the popular entrance to Fairmount Park. Here they left old Isaacs lounging upon a seat, while they skirmished about the neighborhood for the youth who had brought the poisoned liquor.

Bludsoe had no doubt but that he could find the youth, remembering that he had lived in this vicinity three years before. He had once thrashed this same boy for maltreating a little girl; it was this fact that caused him to remember the youth so long.

Jaunders went in one direction and the Phenix in another, and after half an hour they ran down their game, in a little by-street or alley. The boy started and flushed red and white by turns, when he saw the two young men. Knowing he was guilty, no doubt, he trembled at thought of the consequences.

He stopped still, however, at a signal from Jack Jaunders, for with one of the young men coming at him in either direction, there was no avenue of escape left.

"Well?" Jaunders demanded, interrogatively, as he laid his hand heavily upon the youth's shoulder, "what have you to say for yourself, you young vascal?"

"I don't know—I—I—didn't—I—I—" he faltered, very much frightened, for he had just caught a glimpse of Jack's professional badge. "I—I—"

"Hush! if you attract a crowd, it will go hard

with you, young man, and to my questions I want straightforward, truthful answers. Who gave you that demijohn of drugged brandy?"

"Isaacs, sir—the Jew that used to keep a pawnshop!" declared the boy.

"What is your name, then?"

"James Garlon, sir."

"Well, James Garlon, I want you to understand that it won't pay you to lie to us. I am on the force, and unless you make a clean breast of it, I'll jerk you off to the station-house quicker'n you ever went anywheres. Isaacs did not send the liquor, for we have seen him concerning the matter; now, who did? Who put you up with the lies?"

James Garlon began to snivel.

"I don't know—" he began, but Jaunders checked the falsehood midway in its delivery, by shaking the author of it.

"Stop! no more of your lying. You do know, and shall tell us, or we will put you to work in Moya. Spit it out!"

"I don't know," still protested the boy.

"Do you know what ailed the liquor, then?"

"No, sir."

"Well, it was poisoned. Had we drank of it, we should have died in horrible agony. Now, we want to find this would-be assassin who sent the stuff, and if you don't give us our points, we shall arrest you as being an accessory to the attempted murder. You are in for State Prison sure, unless you can put the responsibility on others."

The boy now began to cry.

"I didn't know it was poisoned, sir, indeed I didn't. Oh! don't arrest me, sir."

"Then tell us who sent you!"

"I will, I will. It was an Italian named Guiseppe Gueleppo, sir. I often run errands for him. He came up from St. Mary's street, an' give me a dollar to carry the brandy to Mr. Bludsoe; but I didn't know it was poisoned."

"No, probably not," Jack said, turning to Bludsoe, Jr. "What do you think of it, Jim?"

"Just what I thought from the first—Chelton is at the bottom of it!" the Phenix replied.

"And he is with Gueleppo, in St. Mary's street, you think?"

"Doubtless. The two villains will cling together to the end. Chelton depends considerably upon the sagacity of the Italian man-butcher, while the latter looks to Chelton for his cash with which to procure liquid-fire. We are upon their trail, at last, I guess."

"Yes, I can easily nose them out, now, with this lad's aid. Was any one with Gueleppo when he gave you the liquor, James?"

"No, sir, he was alone."

"Did he tell you to say that Isaacs sent it, too?"

"Yes, sir, he did."

"All right. Now, we want you to show us whereabouts in St. Mary's street this Italian lives, and then we are through with you. Pard, you wait, here, and keep your eye on this lad, while I run back to the Park and fetch Isaacs. We had best all be in at the death together."

Saying which, the young detective was off like a deer upon his errand.

He soon returned, with the fat Jew, and then the whole party set out in the direction of St. Mary's street.

On the way, Jaunders picked up a couple of police officers, with whom he was intimate, not knowing but their aid might become necessary, ere the two tigers could be ousted from their den.

Into St. Mary's street the little band marched, like an invading army, and they were regarded with much curiosity by the filthy-clad, evil-disposed inhabitants of this notorious precinct.

James Garlon, wishing to extricate himself from blame, did the right thing, and soon pointed out the habitation of the Italian ruffian, Gueleppo. It was in one of the lower apartments of a grimy brick tenement; the blinds were closed, and the door securely fastened upon the inside.

Of course there was no response to Jaunders's rap. He had not expected one.

"You will have to pry open either the door or shutters!" he said, turning to one of the police. "If the devils are inside they intend to keep us out as long as possible!"

The officers accordingly procured axes from a neighboring shop, and attacked the door, determinedly. Soon the panels yielded, and went in with a crash.

An aperture was then made sufficiently large to admit a man's body, and all of the party entered the den, except Isaacs, who had to wait until Bludsoe unfastened the door, as his proportions were too large to permit of his entering through the panel opening.

Inside a strange and startling tableau was presented.

Stretched out at full length upon the floor, were the forms of two men, who were recognizable as the Italian, and his abettor, Arnold Chelton. Examination proved that both were quite dead; and they were also terribly bloated and distorted in countenance.

A demijohn upon a table close at hand revealed the cause of their death. It contained poisoned brandy, exactly the same as that which had been sent Bludsoe!

"They have grown tired of the hunted life, and taken the law into their own hands!" the Boy Phoenix said, sadly, as he gazed upon the two corpses. "May God forgive them and me!"

"Good riddance mit pad rubbish! Petter ash dey had gone deadt mit deirselves, years ago. Dey vas von pig nuisance on der face of der earth, I dells you!" Isaacs said, rubbing his glossy chin, in a satisfied manner. "Und, Samuel, my poy, vile I vas spoking mit you, I dells you sum t'ings vat you don't know."

"Your uncle, Shacob Morgan, made swi wills—one in der forenoon off der 15th of May, unt one in der afternoon off der same day. Ter first one lef' old der broberthy mit Chelton Avenue, an' was locked up mit der safe; der last one lef' it all mit you, so helb me gracious. Dis last vill der old man, who vas a vriend mit me, blaced in my care, along mit dirty t'ousand dollars in cash, vich I vos to keep ondil you got old mit twenty-one years. Yo see ash how Shacob vasn't afraid der trust der old Jewsharp, because ash vot he knew Isaacs vas an honest man."

"Vell, he wanted Chelton Avenue ter have der broberthy ondil you vos twenty-one; den if Chelton Avenue proved ter be a square sort off a veller, I vash ter giff you der dirty t'ousand, unt destroy der vill I held, vich sdill left all der broberthy ter Chelton. But, if der Chelton Avenue turned out ter pe a pad case off limberger cheese, I vas ter broduce der vill, unt der vitnasses, unt put you in Chelton Avenue's place. Dis I should haff done; put now der veller vas deadt, unt dere vas no use ter keep der secret any longer."

"And a right good friend you have been to me, in my checkered experience, Isaacs!" Bludsoe said, grasping the Jew's hand, warmly, "and I shall not soon forg t your kindness. My career for three years back has been rather a questionable one, and Jew though you are, you have indeed proven yourself an honest man, and none of my friends can I respect greater than you. You shall not go unrewarded."

"Eh? vas you say? Reward me? Oh! not mooch, poy! If you shust want ter insult Isaacs, visper sometings apoud reward, again, unt see in vat beautiful sdyle dis Jewsharp vil climb' you! Oh! shiminy gracious, I put a balcony offer mit your eye, like a goose-egg. I vant no reward—I dake no reward, you pet your sauer-kraut on dose. I unt Shake Morgan vas vriends, unt dot vas enough!"

"Well, all right; we won't quarrel over it!" Bludsoe replied.

The bodies of the two suicides were viewed by the coroner, and a verdict rendered; then the new heir saw that both had a respectable interment.

Without the delay of a day, Bludsoe, Jr., or Sam Morgan, had the last will and testament of Jacob Morgan deposited with the Registrar, and testified to.

He then left his affairs in the care and trust of a safe legal firm for settlement, after which he prepared to return westward. He was now rich, and life possessed to him a charm it never had before.

Before he left the East however, he made both Isaacs and Jack Jaunders each a handsome present, and finally persuaded both to accompany him back to the Black Hills.

They did not go to Deadwood, but to another lively little mining strike in the Golden Hills, where Bludsoe learned that the Lennoxes had gone.

The town was full of strangers, and Bludsoe was not recognized among them as the daring road-agent who had in a short time become so notorious in Deadwood circles. Indeed the youth now bitterly repented the rashness of his resolve and success in becoming an outlaw. He saw things in a new and proper light and resolved never again to tarnish the name he bore! It had put a blot upon that name, and he knew he could not easily win pretty Milly, or her father's consent to their union, while he was thus cast in under a cloud.

But he resolved to persevere in his suit, for he felt that in Milly he had found the one girl-woman, who could be aught to him.

He found that the Lennoxes were boarding at the only hotel in the place, and though he yearned to see Milly and press his suit, he felt that it would not be advisable to rush matters. Time works wonders; the ex-Phoenix hoped sincerely that the old saying would apply to his case.

One day, lacking amusement, he shouldered his rifle and set off into the mountains, in quest of game. Practice had made him a good shot, either with rifle or revolver, and therefore it was not long before he had taken all the game he cared to carry back to town.

He was descending the mountain-side, on his return, when his attention was attracted by the cries of a man, who was backed against a cliff, several hundred yards below, and was defending himself with clubbed gun against the attack of a savage she-cinnamon bear, one of whose cubs the venturesome individual was evidently trying to carry off.

At a glance Bludsoe saw that the man was in imminent danger of losing his life, as he could not long fight the brawny brute, who was enraged and eager to crush its puny enemy.

And the young man also made another discovery. The endangered hunter was Mr. Lennox, the father of Milly, the old gent also having come out upon the mountain for a little sport.

But he had got more than he bargained for.

Leaping down the mountain-side with the agility of a goat, Bludsoe soon reached a position from whence he could fire at the bear. Then up came his rifle, there was a sharp report, and down went the great shaggy brute, pierced through the brain by a bullet in the left eye.

Quite dead was the bear when Bludsoe reached the cliff, where Lennox was standing, staring alternately at his deliverer and the animal.

"Ha!" was his exclamation, as the young man came closer. "The road—"

"Once Jim Bludsoe, Jr.—now and forever hereafter Sam Morgan, an honorable man!" was the reply.

"And you shot the bear?" the m...er-speculator asked, incredulously.

"I did, without the least doubt, sir."

"I fired at the brute six times, and scarcely made him wince, young man. It is strange, then, that you could kill him at one shot."

"Not strange, either, sir, for I put the bullet in the right place. How is Miss Milly, sir, may I ask?"

"Quite well, and enjoying this western life immensely. Young man, I hear through your friend, Jaunders, the detective, that you have left your wild life as a road-agent, and are living a creditable life. Also, that your financial condition has been greatly bettered, since we last met. Is this true?"

"I believe such is the case," the Phenix replied. "I am, as I said, Sam Morgan, of Philadelphia, ready for any good work and honorable life."

"Well, then, I withdraw my objections to your suit for my daughter's hand, and so go in and win if you can. Also, allow me to thank you for rescuing me from the bear." And extending his hand, he shook that of Sam warmly.

And Jim Bludsoe, Jr., paid his lady-love a visit, which was mutually pleasant, and when the Boy Phenix next met J. Jaunders, he gave him a brotherly hug for "breaking the path for him." Otherwise, it might have been months before the two loving hearts would have come together.

And there was a wedding, soon. Isaacs was present, and so was Jack, and naturally there was "a time."

The people of Deadwood often wondered at the sudden disappearance of Jim Bludsoe, Jr., but not one of the sharpest-eyed among them ever surmised that handsome and free-hearted Sam Morgan had ever borne the dreaded name. Sam now is a thriving banker in a young mining metropolis, with his father-in-law as partner and manager, and a fine firm they make—while Milly is quite the queen of the city, beautiful, good and wise.

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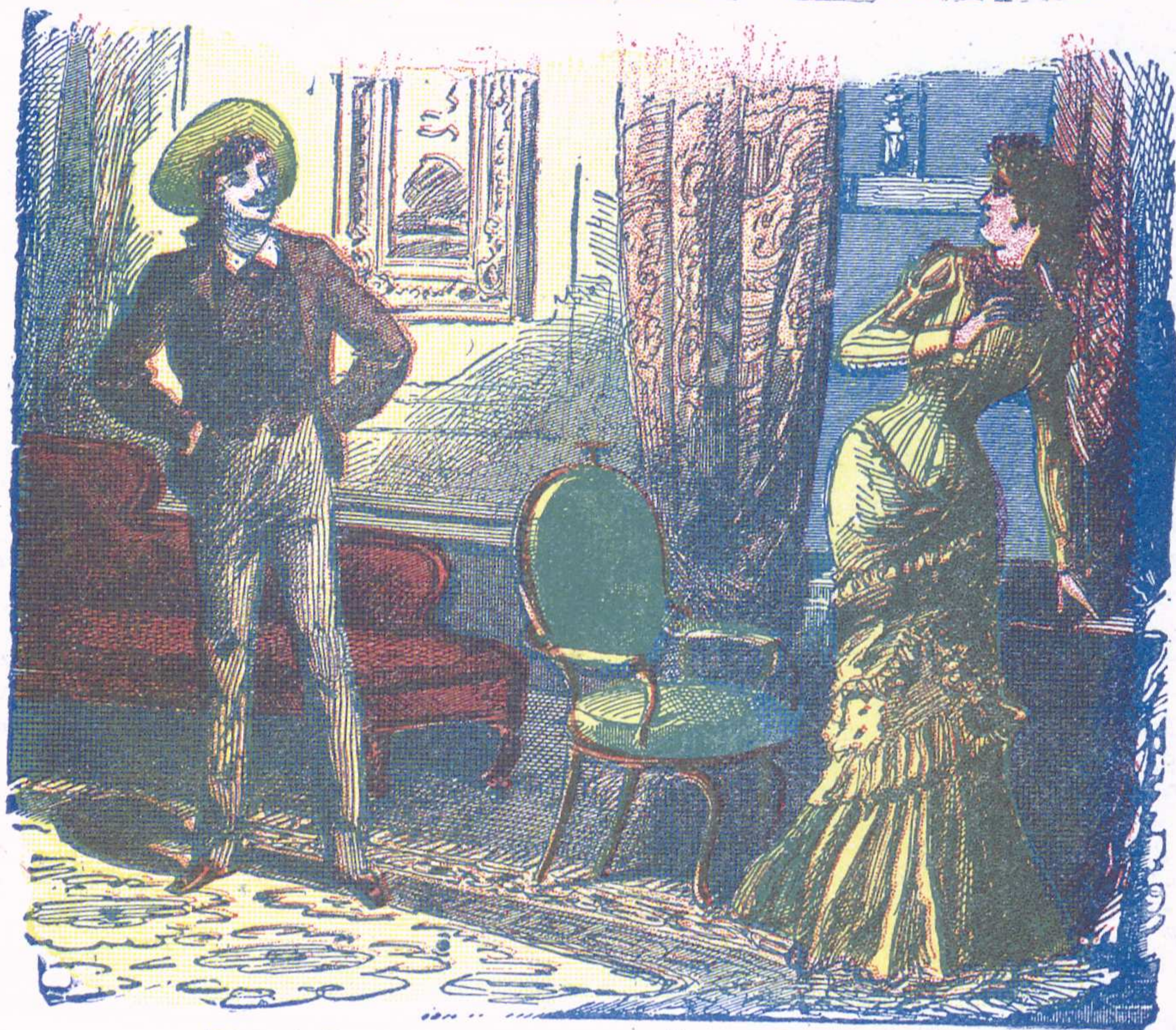
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